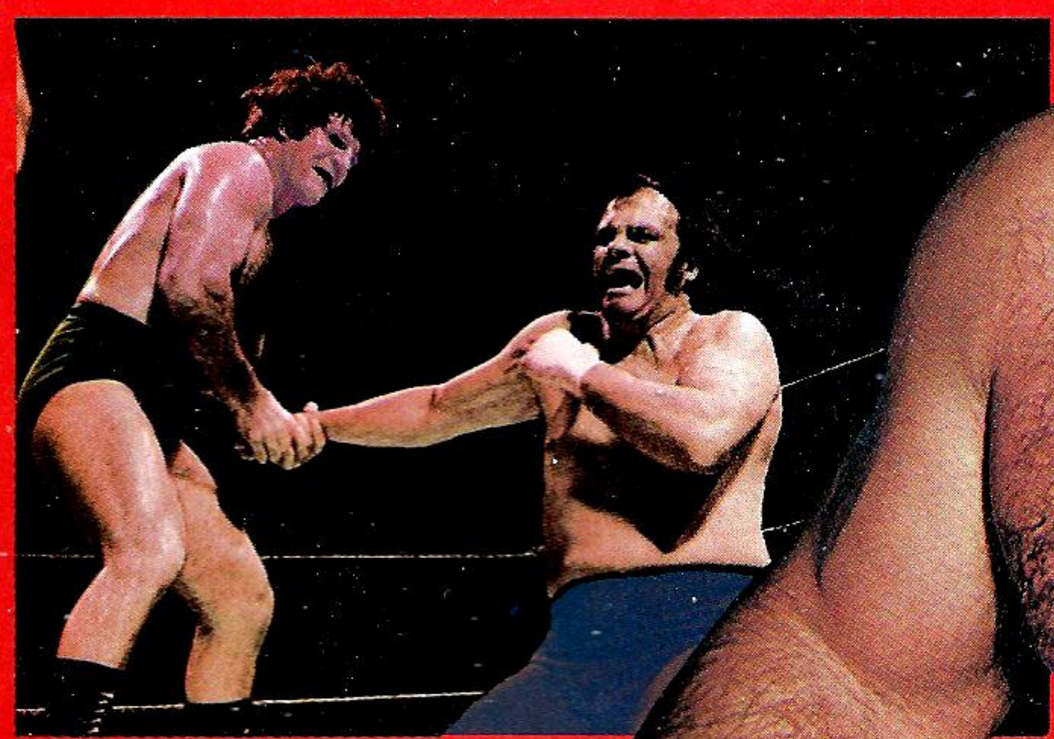
SPORTS REVIEW SERIES

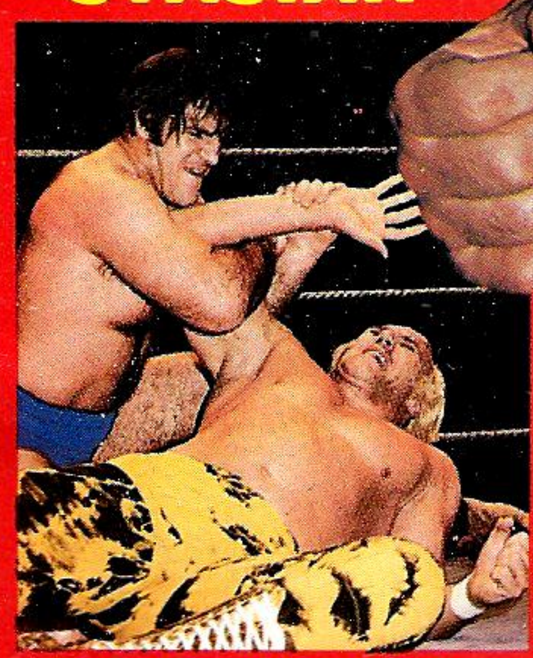
FALL 1980 47841 $1.25

WRESTLING SUPERSTARS

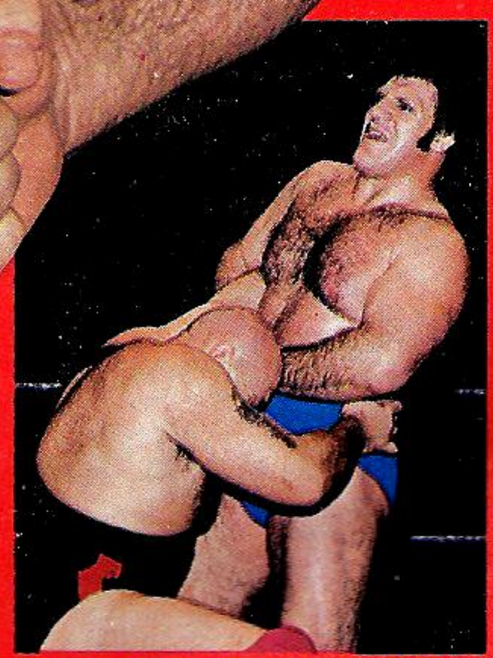
BRUNO SAMMARTINO: "MY 10 TOUGHEST MATCHES"



BRUNO VS. STASIAK



BRUNO VS. GRAHAM



BRUNO VS. KOLOFF

SPOTLIGHT ON DUSTY RHODES

OFFICIAL WRESTLING RATINGS

WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION

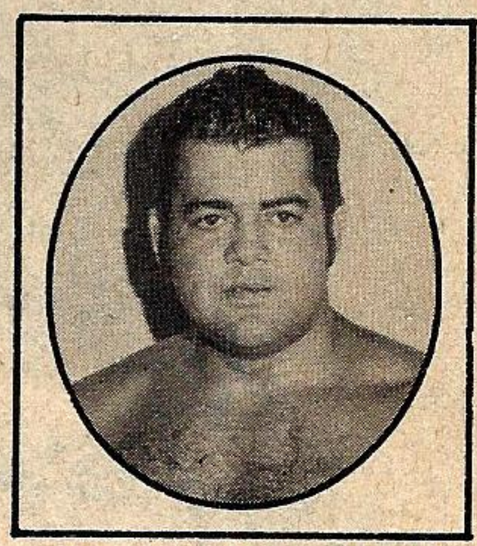
Champion: BOB BACKLUND
1—LARRY ZBYSZKO
2—HULK HOGAN
3—KEN PATERA
4—PAT PATTERSON
5—IVAN PUTSKI
6—TONY ATLAS
7—PEDRO MORALES
8—TITO SANTANA
9—BOBBY DUNCUM
10—SIKA THE SAMOAN

AMERICAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION

Champion: NICK BOCKWINKEL
1—CRUSHER
2—DINO BRAVO
3—VERNE GAGNE
4—GREG GAGNE
5—BILLY ROBINSON
6—MAD DOG VACHON
7—JESSE VENTURA
8—JERRY LAWLER
9—ADRIAN ADONIS
10—JERRY BLACKWELL

MOST POPULAR

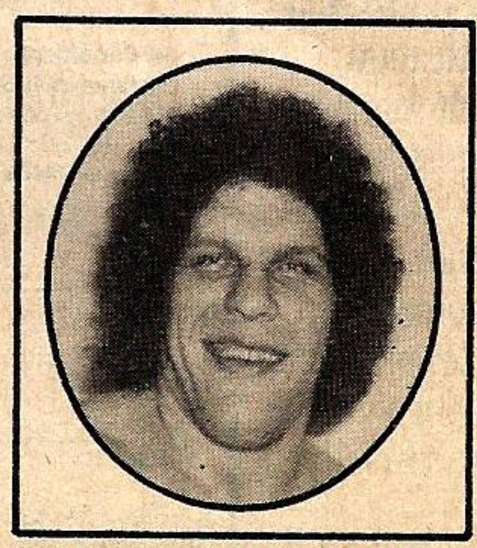
1—ANDRE THE GIANT
2—BRUNO SAMMARTINO
3—DUSTY RHODES
4—MR. WRESTLING II
5—BOB BACKLUND
6—CHIEF JAY STRONGBOW
7—RICK STEAMBOAT
8—DINO BRAVO
9—DAVID VON ERICH
10—GREG GAGNE



PEDRO MORALES

GREG GAGNE

RIC FLAIR



ANDRE THE GIANT

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE

Champion: HARLEY RACE
1—DUSTY RHODES
2—RIC FLAIR
3—MR. WRESTLING II
4—DON MURACO
5—AUSTIN IDOL
6—KEVIN VON ERICH
7—JIM BRUNZELL
8—LEROY BROWN
9—STAN STASIAK
10—TED DiBIASE

TAG TEAMS

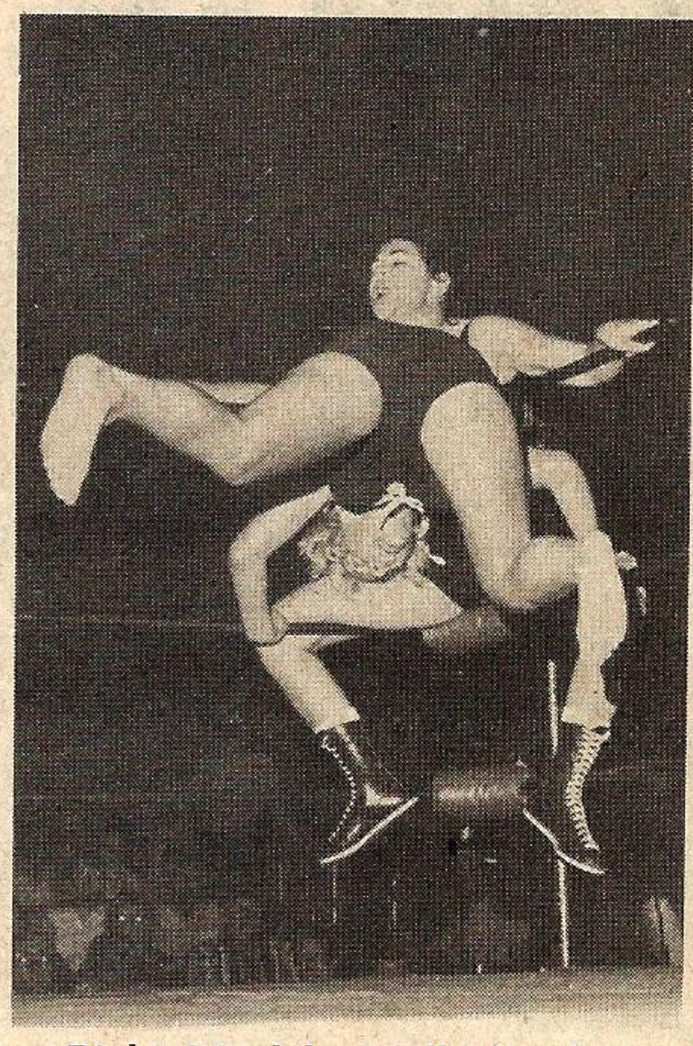
1—THE SAMOANS
2—GREG VALENTINE & RAY STEVENS
3—VERNE GAGNE & MAD DOG VACHON
4—JACK BRISCO & JIM GARVIN
5—KEVIN SULLIVAN & TONY ATLAS
6—IVAN PUTSKI & TITO SANTANA
7—MASKED SUPERSTARS
8—MR. HITO & MR. SAKURADA
9—IVAN KOLOFF & ALEXIS SMIRNOFF
10—TOMMY & EDDIE GILBERT

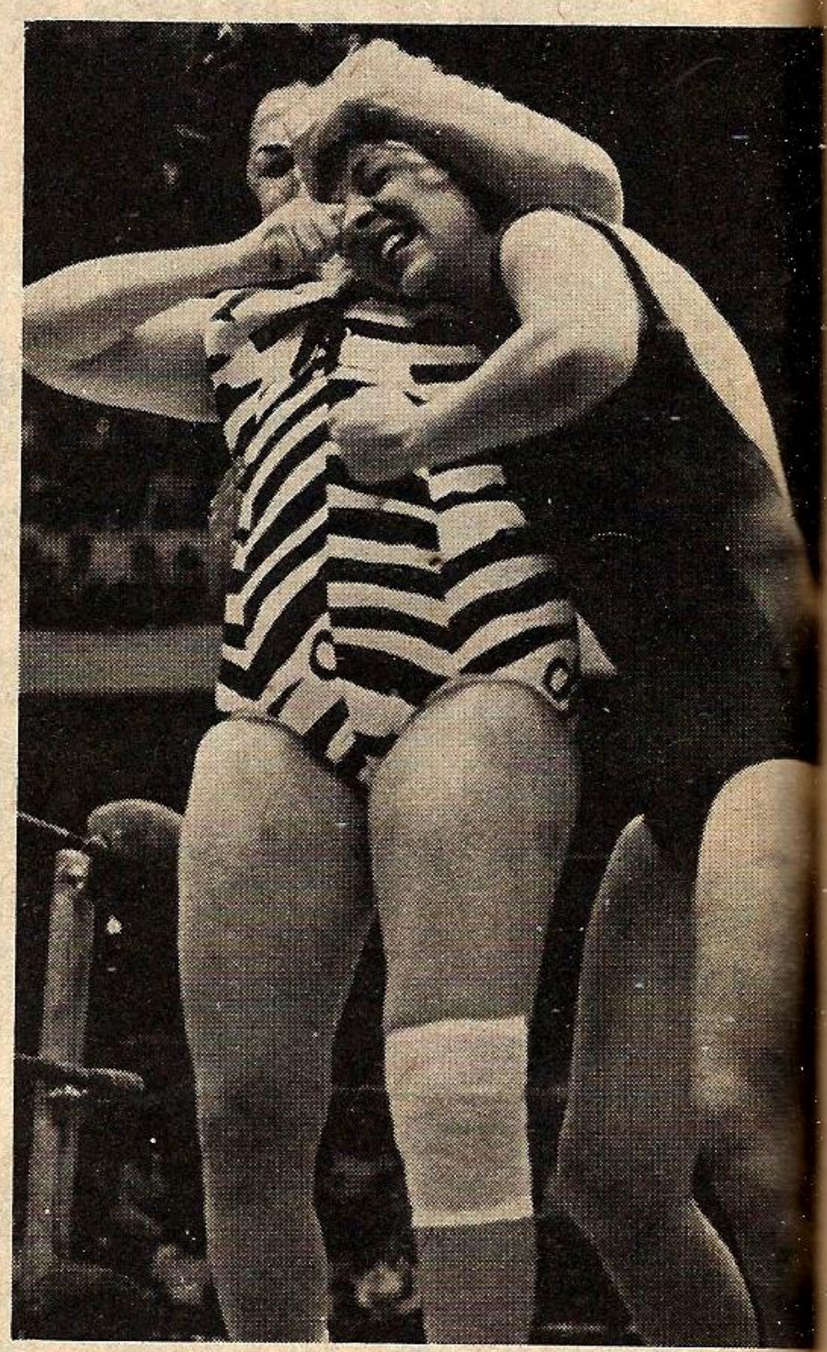
MOST HATED

1—LARRY ZBYSZKO
2—AUSTIN IDOL
3—JIMMY SNUKA
4—TERRY FUNK
5—IVAN KOLOFF
6—HULK HOGAN
7—HARLEY RACE
8—NICK BOCKWINKEL
9—EDDY MANSFIELD
10—MASKED SUPERSTAR

The Moolah-Vic

Trapped in the ropes, Moolah is helpless against a perfectly and brutally executed flying headbutt by Vicki (right). Both women can recall much agony from this feud!





Right: Moolah cruelly digs her knuckle into Vicki's eye, a move as painful as it's cruel. Below right: Barefoot Vicki savagely kicks Moolah hard in the belly, knocking the air from her lungs!

IF YOU THINK all the feuds in wrestling are between men, you are dead wrong! One of the most blazing feuds is between two women!

One of them is the world heavyweight champion, the Fabulous Moolah. The other is a cute blonde, Vicki Williams. Vicki's been trying to knock Moolah off her throne for several years now, but to no avail.

"Vicki Williams will never win my title," Moolah confides. "No way. I do admit that she has some ability. Limited that it is. But Vicki Williams is not as smart, talented or as good a wrestler as I am."

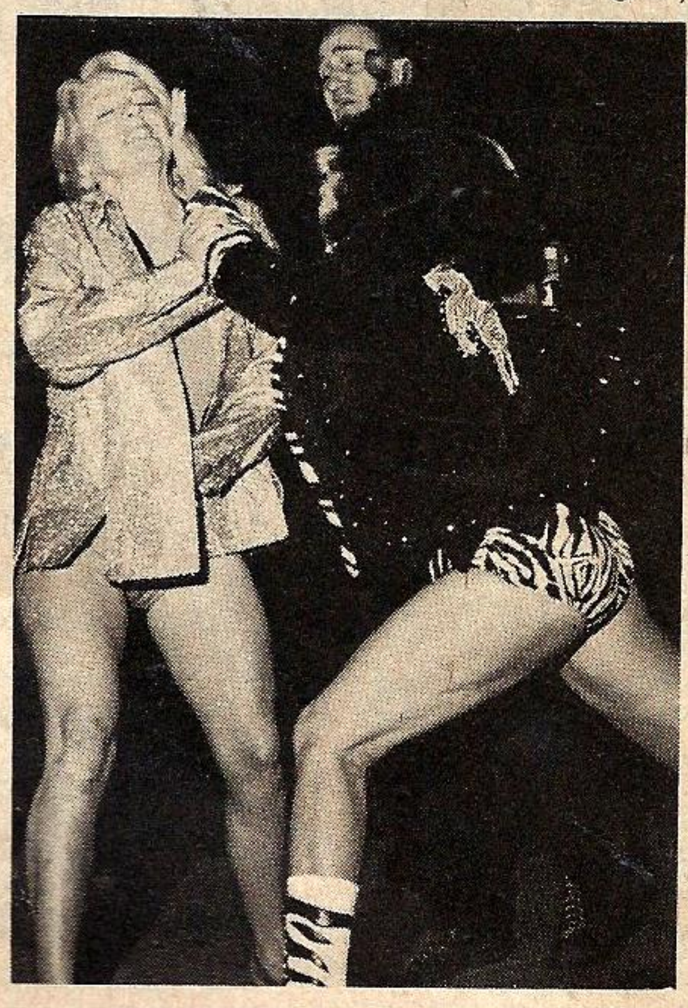
Did these two gals dislike each other the first time they squared off?

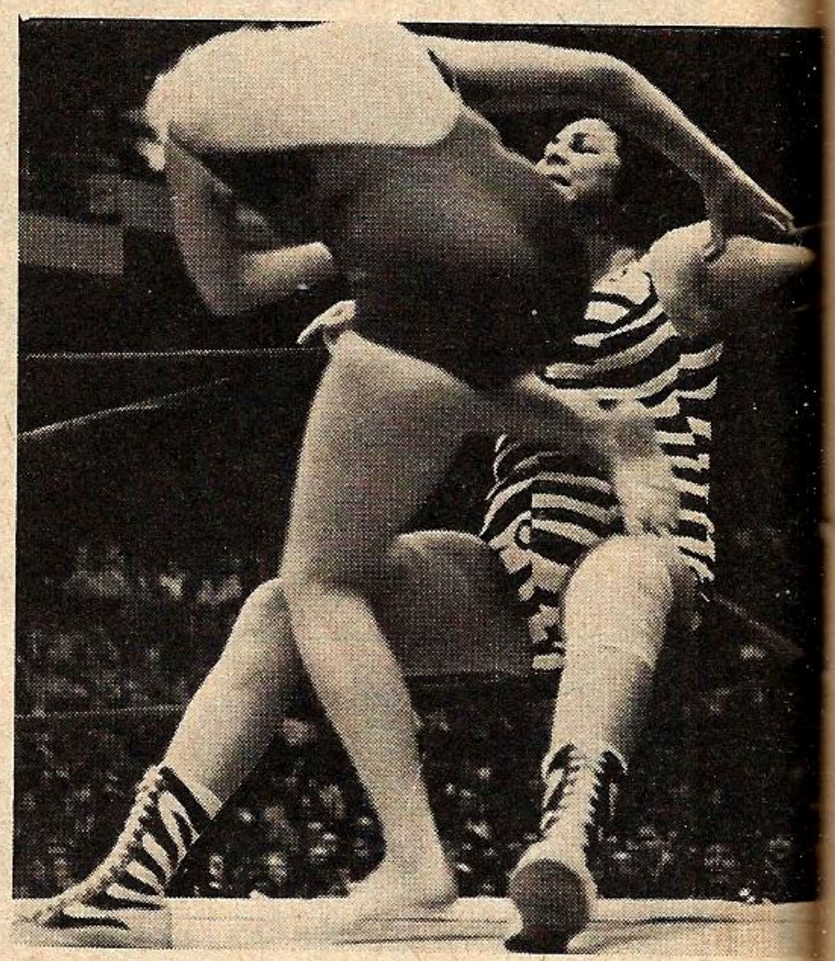
"I knew I disliked her," Vicki recalls. "I was against her tactics. Against her whole way of wrestling. She uses every foul trick she can think of.

"A wrestler who handles herself in the ring like Moolah does is out to win any way she can. I think that winning by foul moves is a cheap victory. I could never do it."

And here's Moolah's side.

"I dod not dislike Vicki immediately," Moolah reports. "It took a match or two before I realized she had an ego problem. She was out to make a name for herself fast. She also mouthed off about my tactics right after our first match. So





The feud is so intense, Moolah attacks Vicki before the match even begins in Atlanta (right).

WILDCAT

ki Williams Feud

Vicki Williams' hatred for the Fabulous Moolah will never come to an end. And Vicki is still intent on ending Moolah's reign as world champion.

Vicki flips Moolah and sends the legendary champion crashing to the canvas in a wild bout (left).

little by little Vicki Williams and myself became enemies. And we still are.

"About her statements calling me a rule buster, well I win any way I have to. If my opponent uses foul moves, so do I. I can wrestle as scientifically as anyone. And if you watch Vicki Williams, I'm sure you will see that she is not the rule abiding wrestler she claims to be. Mark my words. Watch her carefully next time you see her wrestle. She's as rule bustin' as the best of 'em."

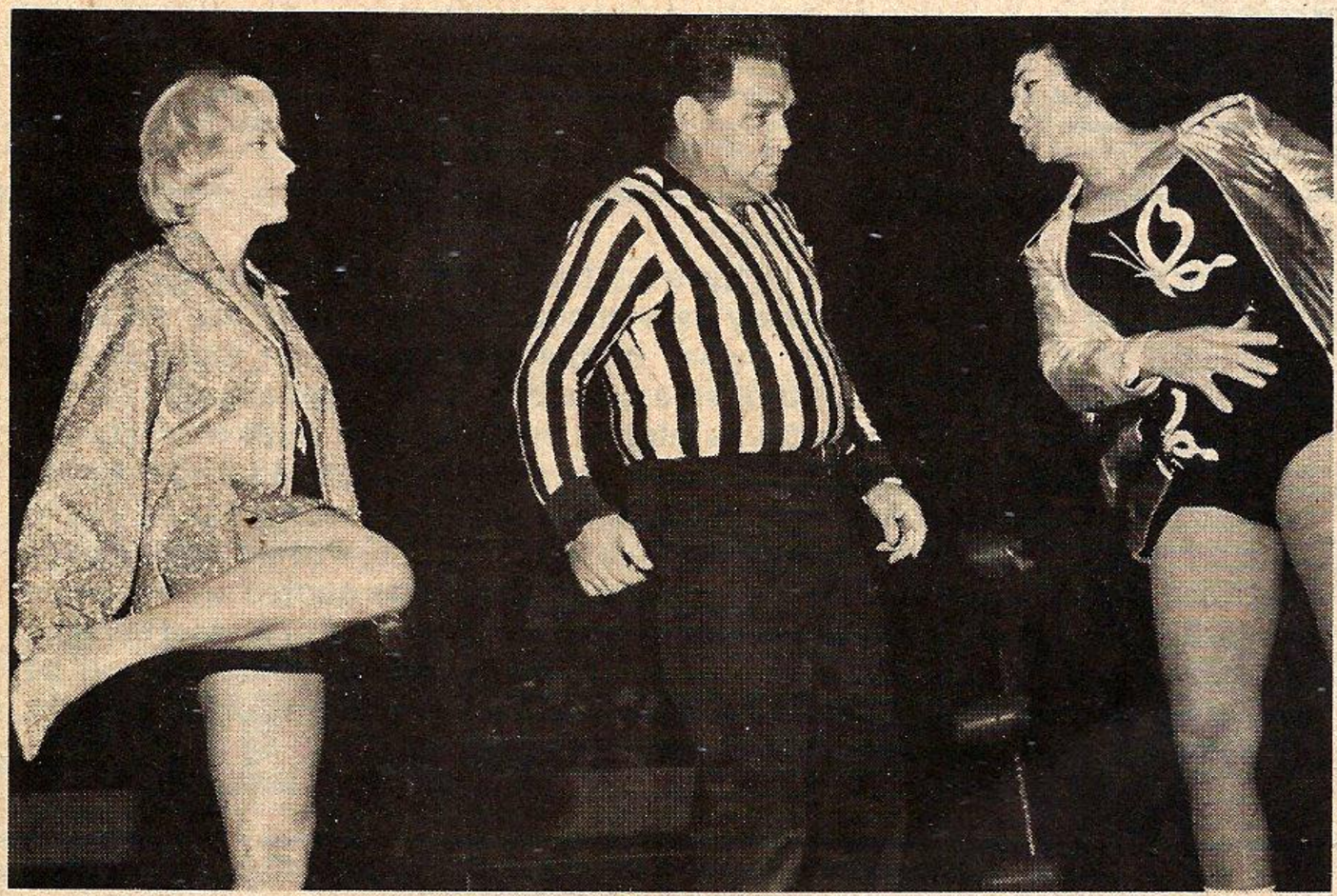
Injuries have plagued both gals since their feud began. And Moolah claims, "Williams has got a lot of scars from our battles. You won't find one on me, though."

Will Vicki give up her quest to rid the world of Moolah?

"No way," she stresses. "Not by a long shot. That would be throwing my greatest dream out the window. I intend to beat Moolah, thoroughly and scientifically. She is a worried champion. I'm sure of that. She does not look forward to her matches against me!"

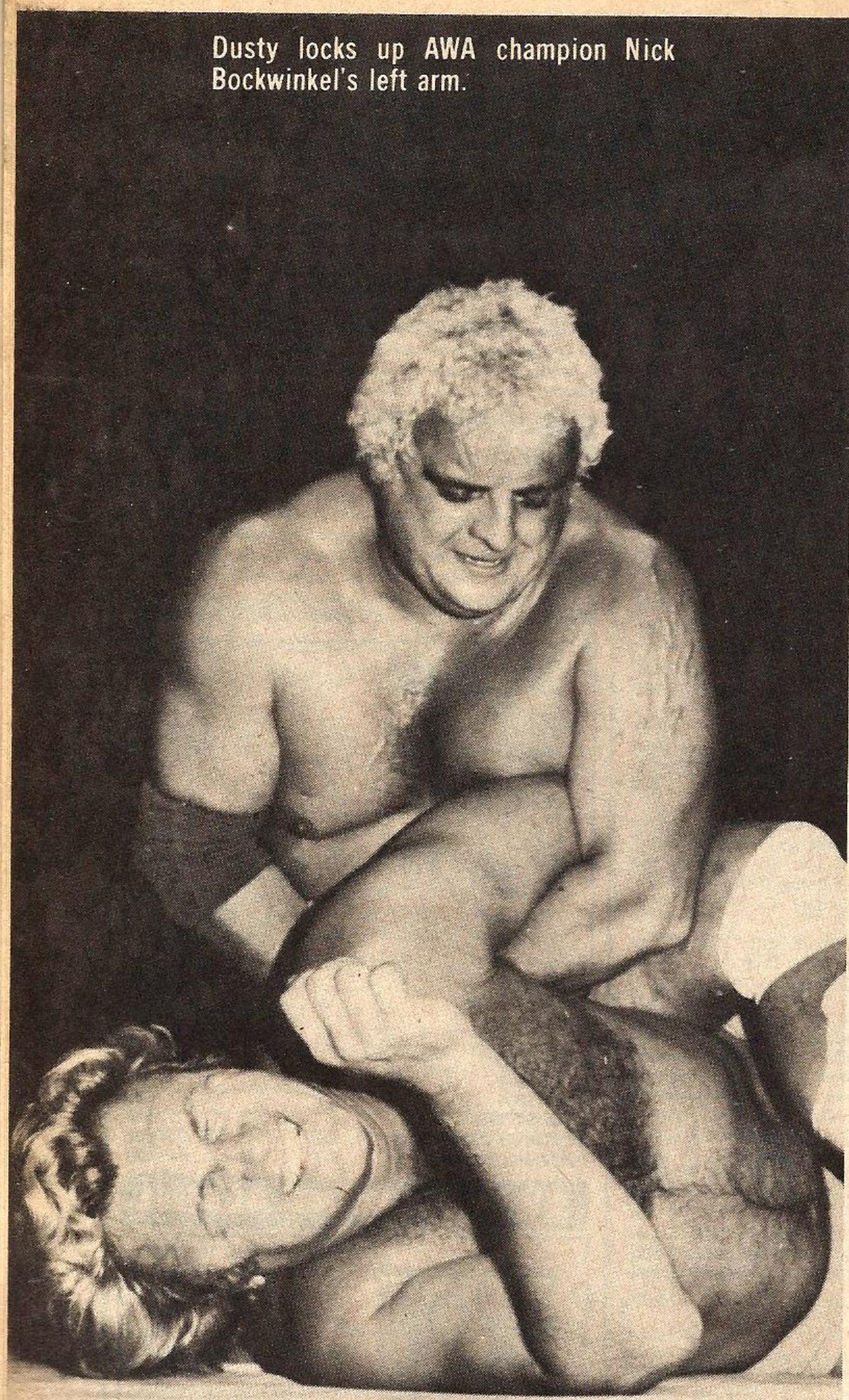
As of this writing, Moolah and Williams have been signed to yet another battle. So, if you like feuds and want to see a battle you won't forget, go see a Moolah-Vicki Williams match.

"Good idea," Moolah points out. "Especially if you like to see a little blonde get the tar beaten out of her!" □

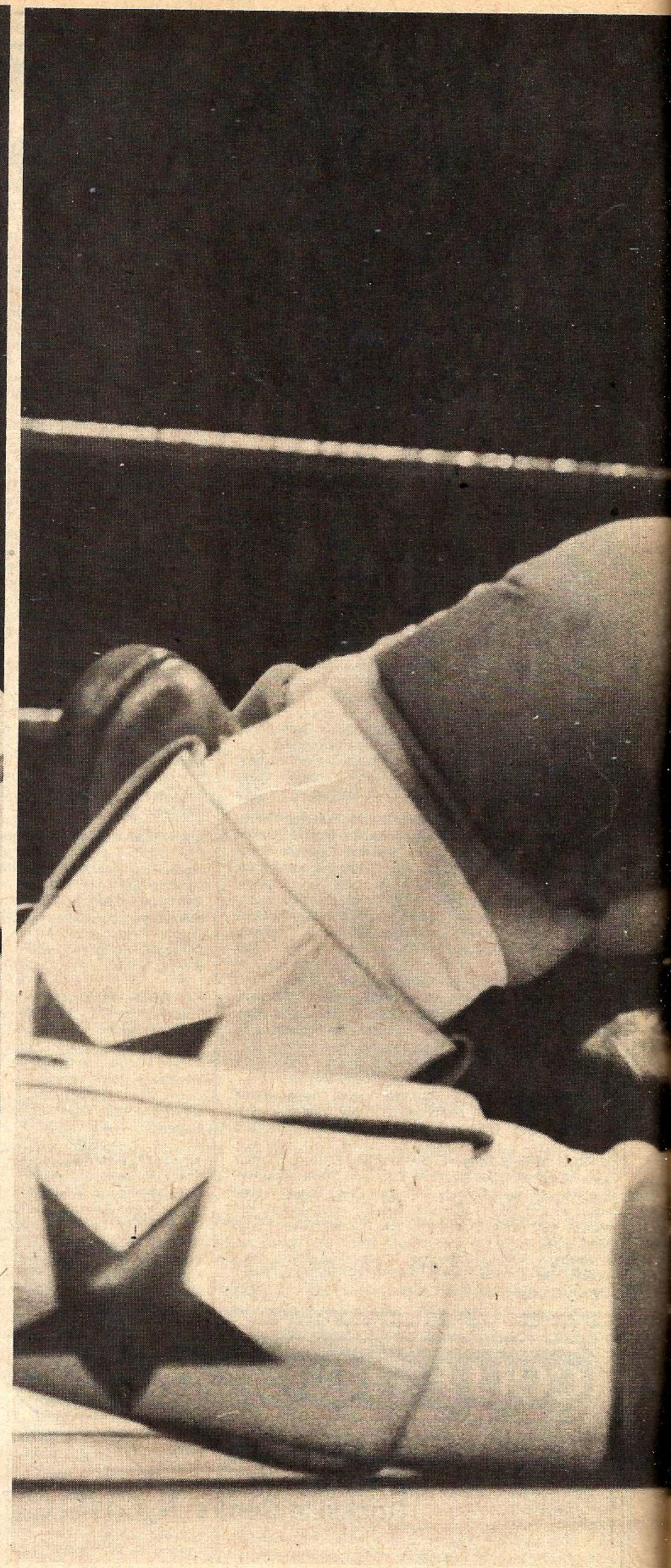


As Vicki removes her slippers, Moolah argues with the referee and insults Williams (left).

S AT WAR!

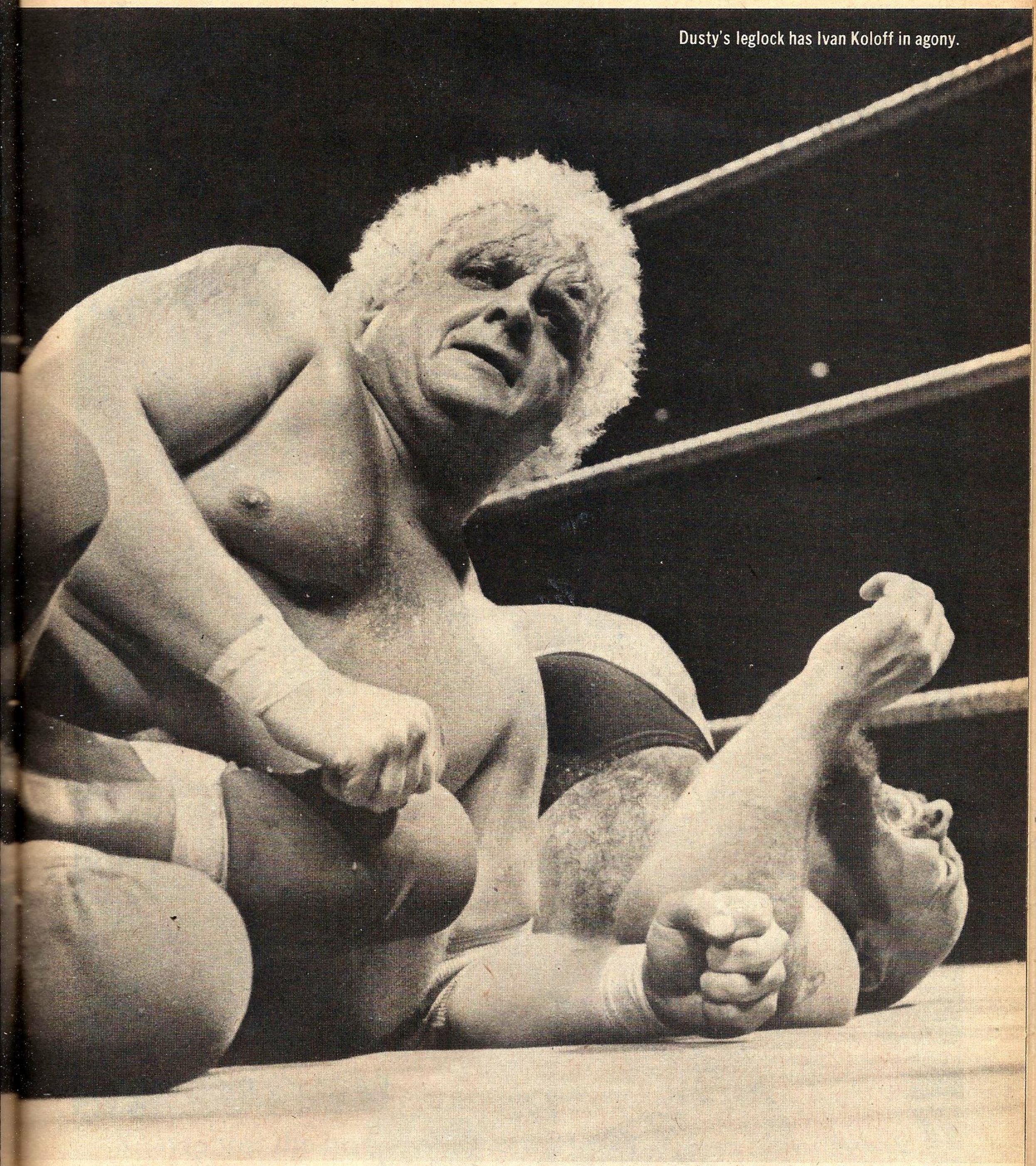


Dusty locks up AWA champion Nick Bockwinkel's left arm.



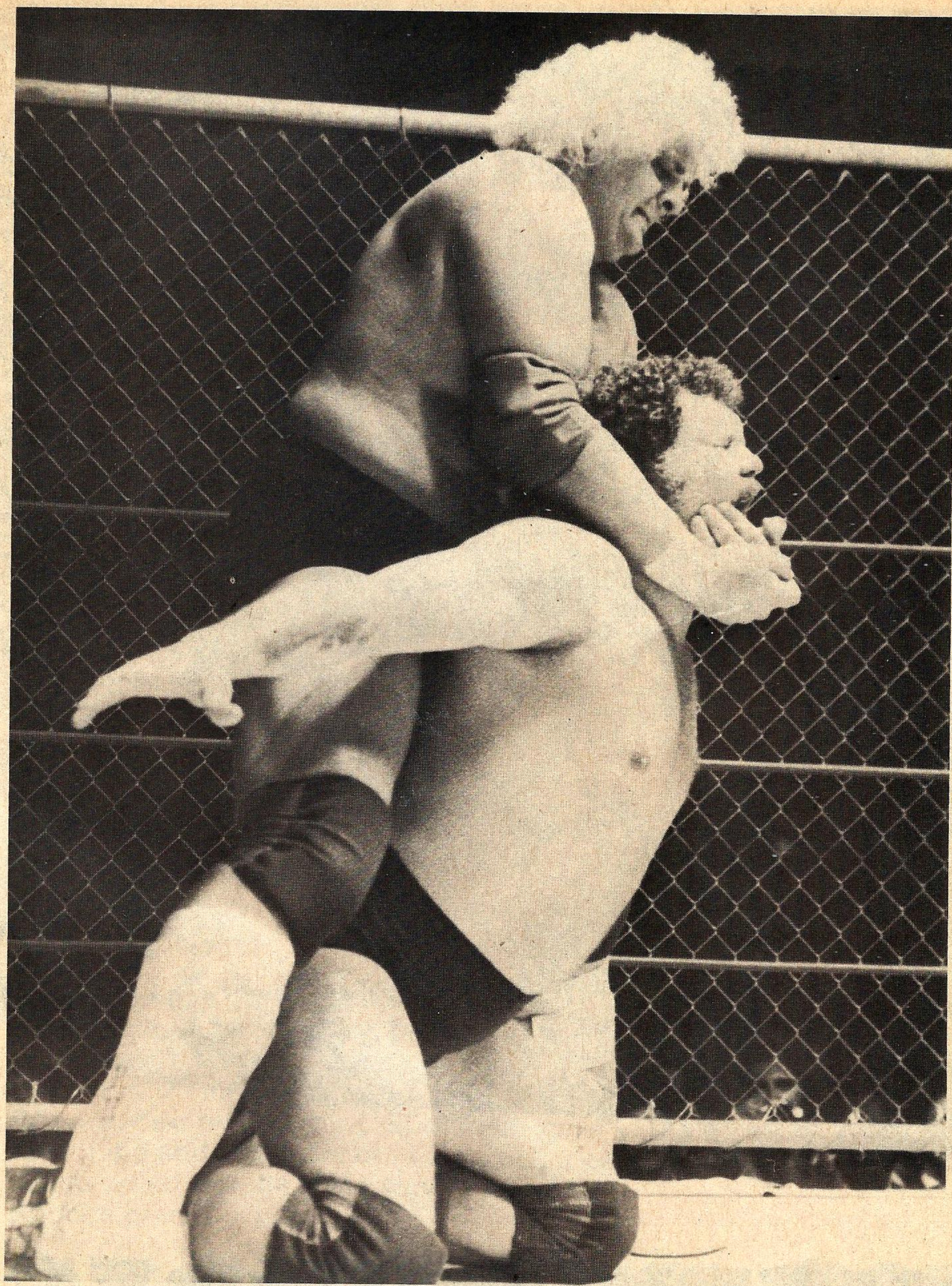
A great man, a great wrestler. In this unique photo story, the illuminating spotlight upon the life and times of Dusty Rhodes. Few men dominate both the tempo and character of professional wrestling the way Rhodes does

SPOTLIGHT ON



Dusty's leglock has Ivan Koloff in agony.

DUSTY RHODES



With a firm grip on Race's chin, Rhodes bends the champion's back completely out of shape.

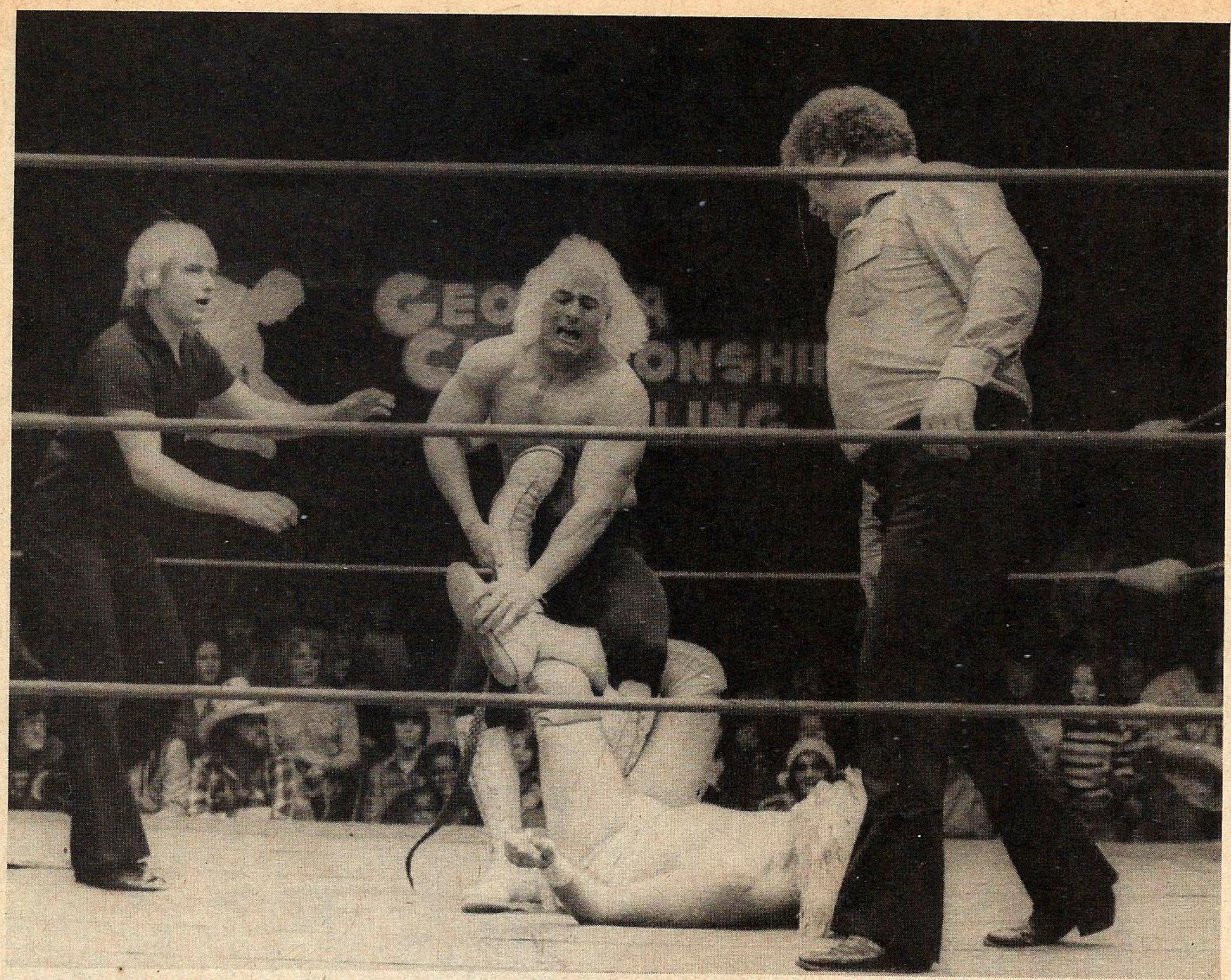
(Continued on page 48)

TOMMY RICH: WHY HE'LL NEVER RECOVER FROM HARLEY RACE'S SNEAK ATTACK

THE WOUND HAS HEALED. It's the scar that could destroy Tommy Rich.

It takes an act of will for Tommy Rich to recount the events of that awful night. He leaves out a great deal, making the story shorter. The facts are clear. In preparation for an NWA title match with Harley Race,

X-rays show the break has healed. He has a clean bill of health from doctors. Fans anxiously await his recapturing the Georgia title and wreaking vengeance upon Austin Idol and Harley Race. While the physical scars heal, Tommy Rich's emotional lacerations may never disappear



Aided by NWA champion Harley Race, Austin Idol applies the figure-four leglock that nearly ended Tommy Rich's career. Tommy's leg is cured, but the long-range affects are uncertain.

Rich battled Austin Idol. Race watched at ringside. Idol maneuvered Tommy into a figure four leglock, and before he could even attempt an escape, Race climbed into the ring to inflict further injury. The sneak-attack resulted in Tommy's leg being seriously injured.

At first, they thought Tommy's career was over. Only after he exercised tirelessly did they decide not to operate. Tommy managed to get back into shape within a month. He worked hard, brutally hard. He was ready for revenge.

Back in the gym, Tommy trained night and day. His friends watched in awe. No one had ever come back so quickly from so serious an injury. You could see every muscle in his body tensing for action. Tommy was ready.

He immediately wanted to wrestle Harley Race. Friends insisted he take a couple of easy matches first. Tommy reluctantly agreed. They didn't know there could be no easy matches for Tommy. There may never be easy matches for Tommy again.

The night of the match, Tommy was ready. He couldn't wait to get back in action. He was poised, prepared and just the right bit nervous. He delighted in the crowd's applause. Then he heard the bell ring.

The match began. Something was horribly wrong. Tommy's concentration was gone. He kept looking over his shoulder, as if a sneak attack were sure to happen. His opponent took quick advantage of the situation. Though Rich finally won the bout, what should have been an easy victory became an ordeal.

It happened the next time, also. Tommy kept looking over his shoulder. His movements were clumsy, as if he just couldn't move correctly. Other wrestlers watched and shook their heads. To defeat any foe, a grappler must give total concentration to his

opponent. Every thought must be directed at the person across the ring. If that concentration is broken, a wrestler might as well surrender before he begins.

Friends hoped Tommy's fear would pass. Still, in match after match, Tommy kept looking back, searching for the marauding figure of Harley Race. He seemed afraid to mount a sustained attack. He couldn't concentrate at all. The greatness that was Tommy Rich seemed gone.

Friends tried to give him advice. Others volunteered to stand around the ring, making it impossible for anyone to sneak attack him. Tommy refused their help.

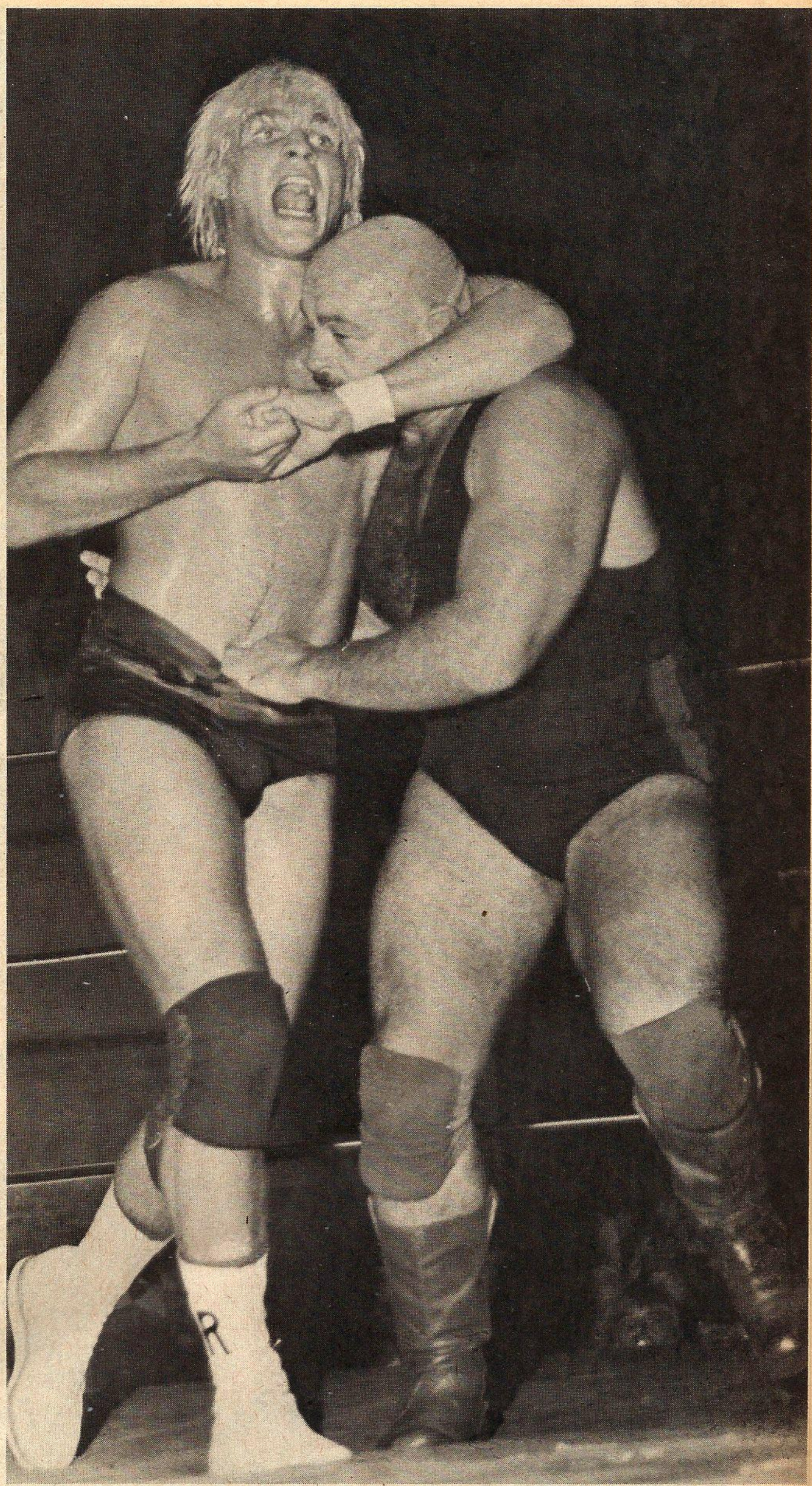
"I've got to lick this thing myself," Tommy explained. "I can't expect to be helped all the time. There's nothing to worry about."

Everyone—including Tommy—knows better. There is something very real to worry about. It's wrestling's dirty little secret that a sneak attack often ends careers. Afterwards, the victims can never return to form, never shake off the fear that someone is after them. Unable to concentrate on a match, they go down to defeat after defeat. Tommy Rich could suffer the same fate.

Harley Race knew what he was doing when he attacked Rich. The mangled leg wasn't important. Harley was after Tommy's mind. There are many ways to drive a man from wrestling. Race knows them all.

When Race is approached

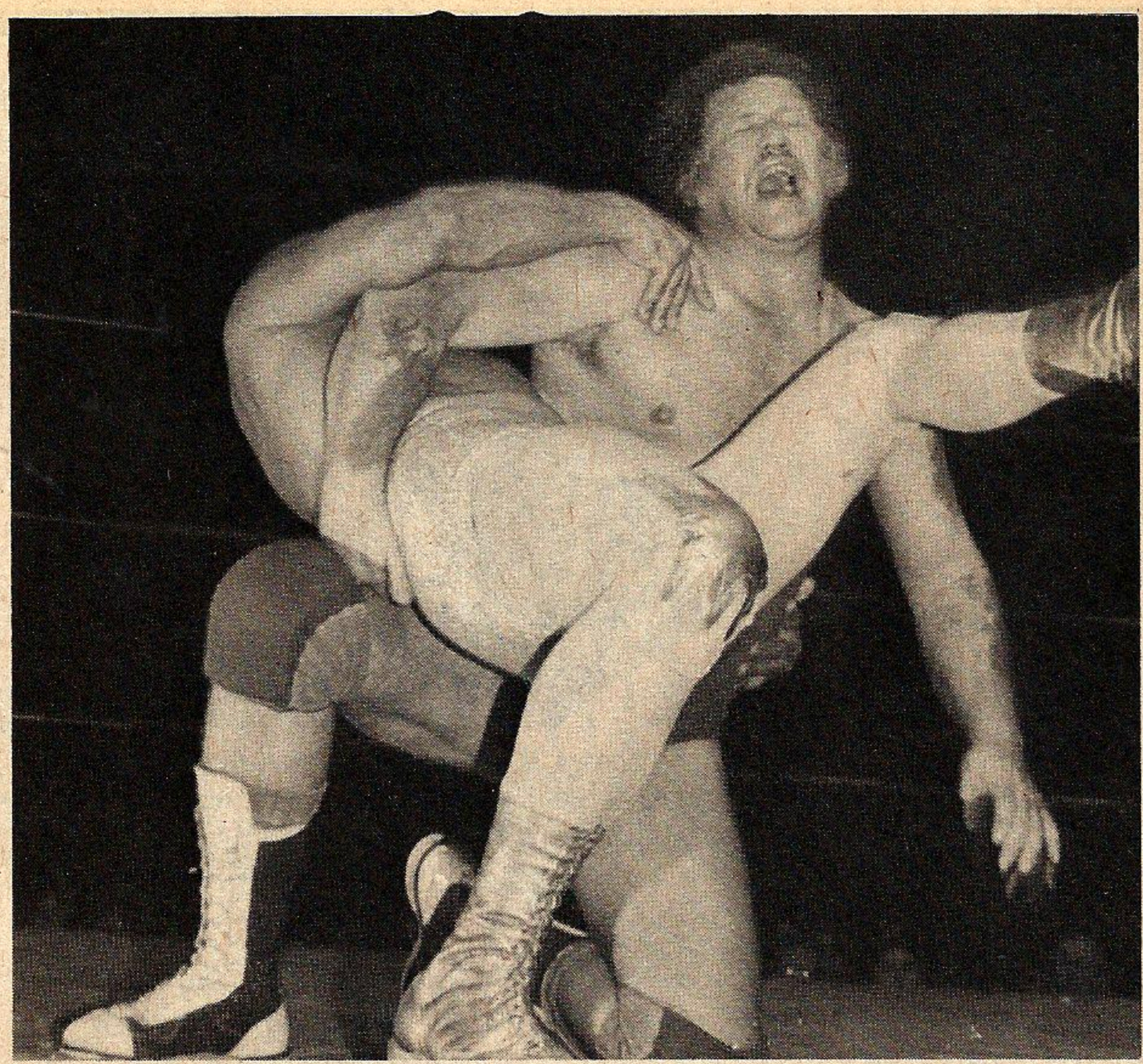
(Continued on page 54)



Wrestling a superstar such as Ivan Koloff (above) requires a wrestler's strictest concentration. Tommy cannot concentrate on an opponent when he is constantly bracing himself for a potential sneak-attack by Austin Idol.

MIL MASCARAS: COWARD?

Harley Race claims Mascaras has denied him a rematch. Right: The champion slams Mascaras across his knee. Below right: Mil puts the squeeze on Race.



THE LAUGHTER has stopped. People are saying it and other people are agreeing. Even wrestlers who admire Mil Mascaras are wondering if he is really a coward.

It started with Harley Race. The NWA champion had almost lost his belt to Mil. Race knew if his championship was to retain its honor, he'd have to defeat Mascaras convincingly. The night after the bout, he went to the promoters to arrange a rematch.

"Can't be done," they told him. "Mascaras leaves the area tomorrow. He's going to Japan."

Race was livid. "What the hell

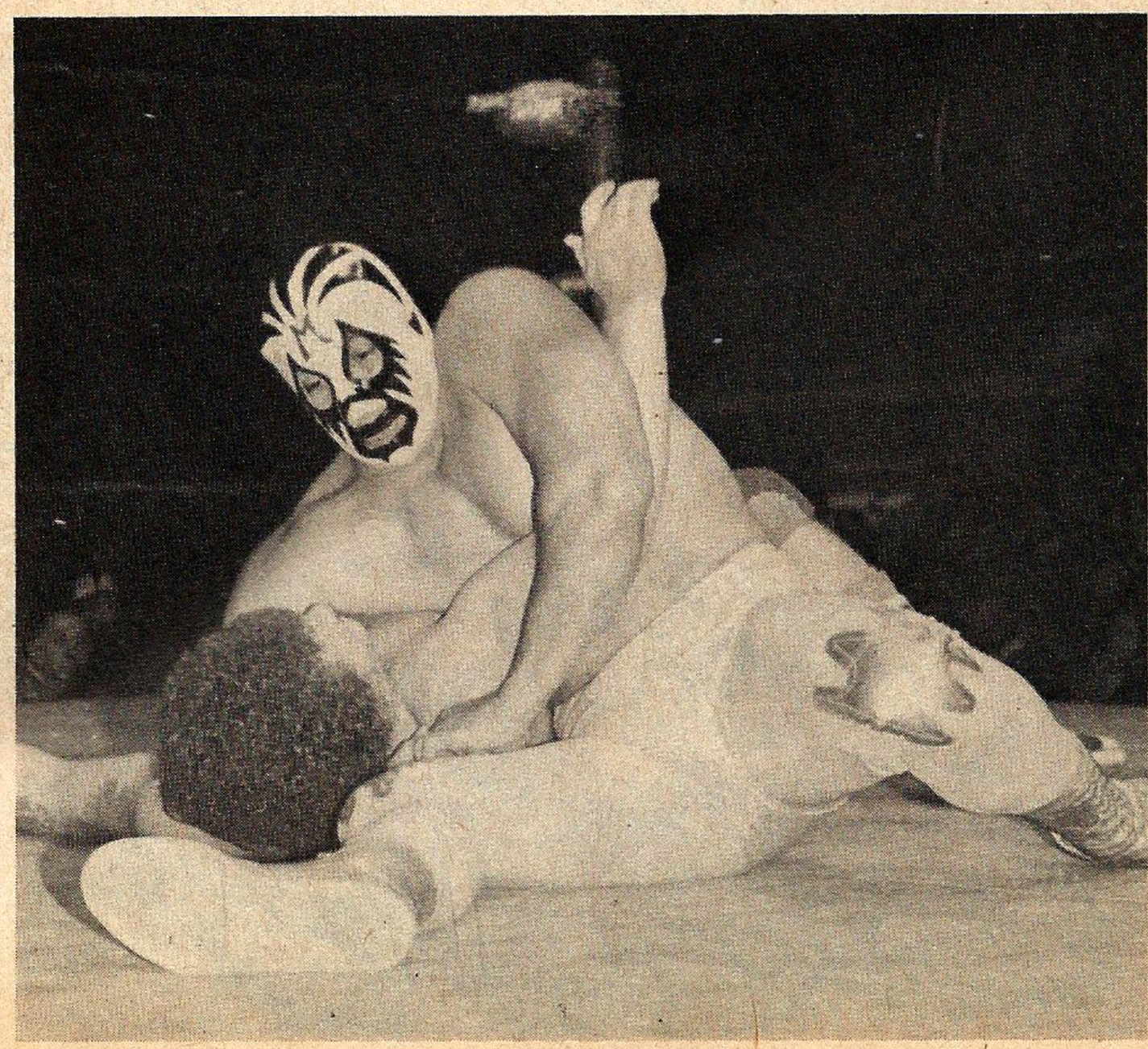
Is Mil Mascaras a coward? In a shocking article, the reasons why Mil Mascaras moves from area to area so quickly is explored. Mascaras fans may not want to read this article

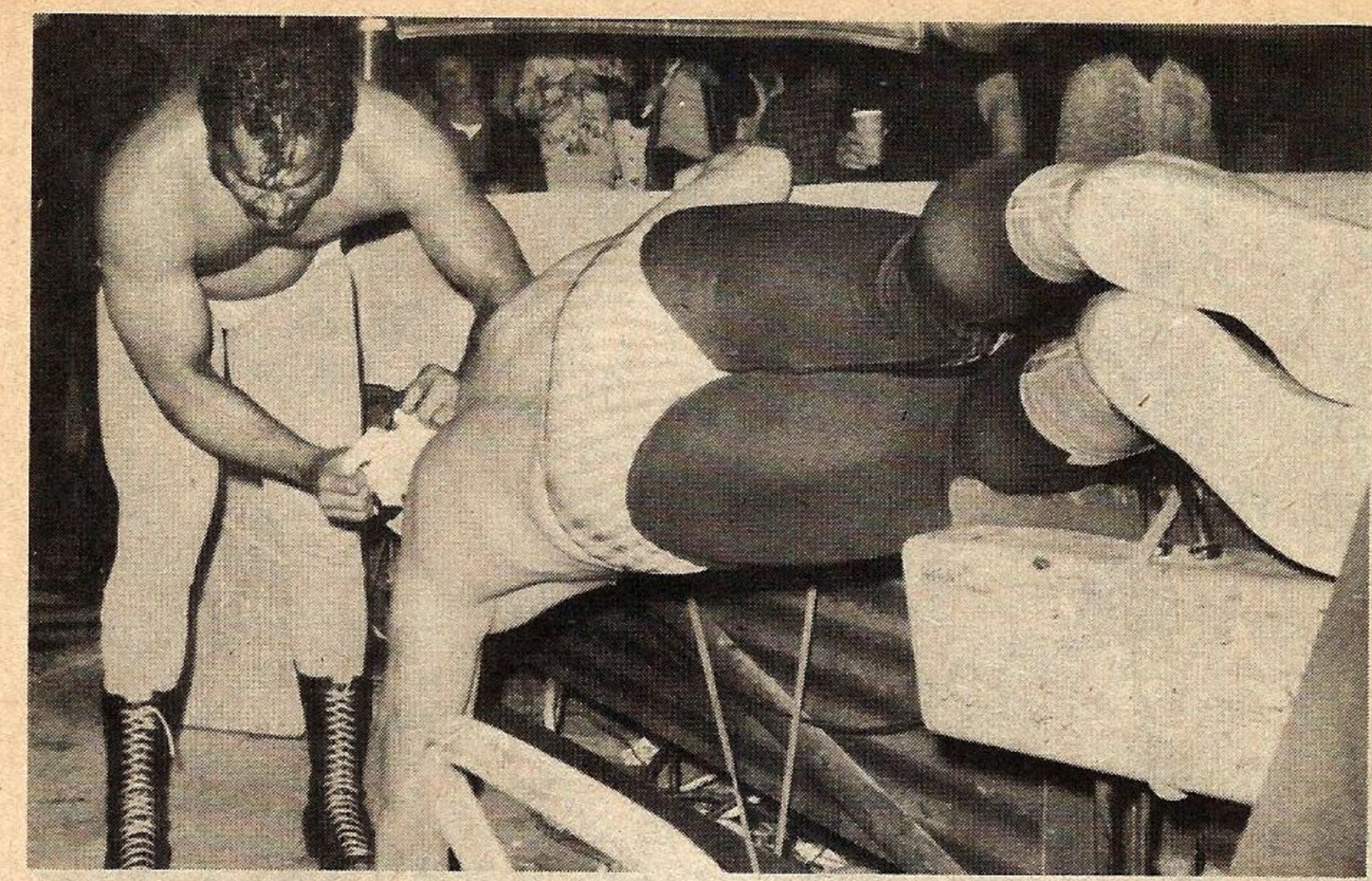
is going on here? What's this hit-and-run bull? The bum comes into an area, looks good for a few bouts, then turns tail and runs? That's lousy. That's damn lousy!

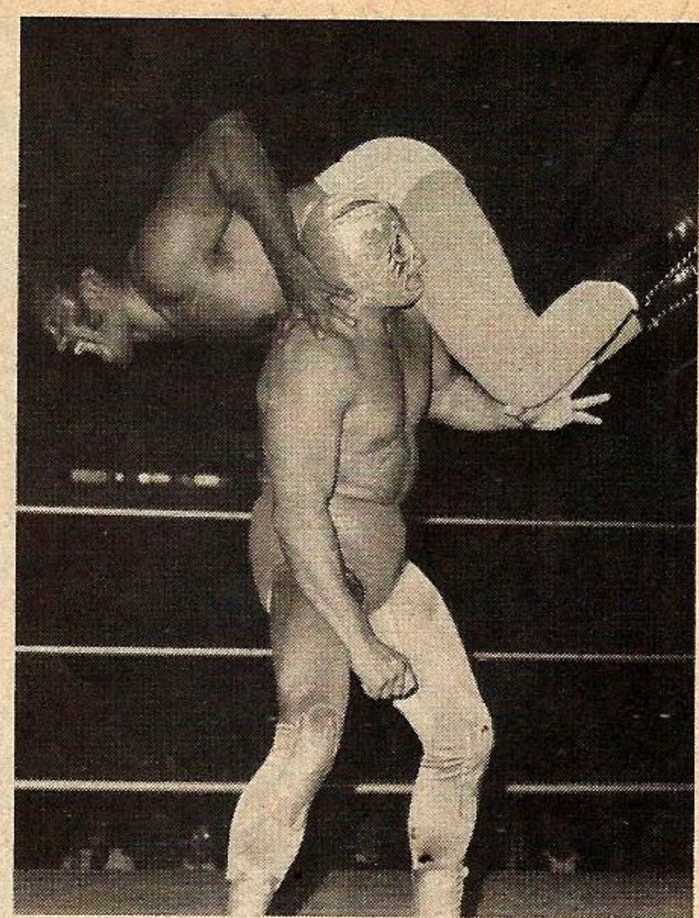
"A real veteran stands around in one area. He lets everyone get a shot. Hell, anyone can come in and win a few matches. It takes a real pro to turn back challengers month after month. Mascaras is a coward! He's afraid to stay and really get in the trenches. I bet he knows after three matches anyone can beat him. I'd shoot that flying wrestler down for good!

"He's got no guts. If he had any guts at all, he'd be willing to stay. He doesn't travel around. He runs."

At first, most people dismissed Race's rantings.







Both Victor Rivera and Bull Ramos charge Mascaras with cowardice, claiming he wrestles, packs his bags, and leaves, without giving anybody a chance to get even. Above left: A bloody Rivera slams Mil's head into the side of the ring. Above right: Mascaras backdrops Rivera. Below: Ramos cries out from the pain of Mil's bow-and-arrow hold.

Then, other people started saying the same thing. After all, it is the mark of a real professional to stay in one area and continually beat the best. A grappler's honor demands he allow other people to get to know his moves. Mascaras never gives the competition that opportunity.

Still, most people laughed off the accusations. After all, Mil is one of the greatest wrestlers of all time. No one can deny that. Can they?

More and more people began to deny it. Bull Ramos, Victor Rivera, and other recent opponents complained Mascaras refused to give them a rematch. "He doesn't let you get even," Rivera stated. "The bum just comes into the area, waits until he makes you look bad for a match, then runs off. Where I come from, a guy like that is a coward. Have you ever known that slob to stay around long enough to really give someone a chance at him?"

Admirers of Mascaras, and they are legion, tried to argue with Rivera. Only they couldn't think of a time when Mil stayed in one place for more than a year. If a man has to travel most of the time, you can call that popularity. But if he travels all of the time, you have to wonder if he's scared.

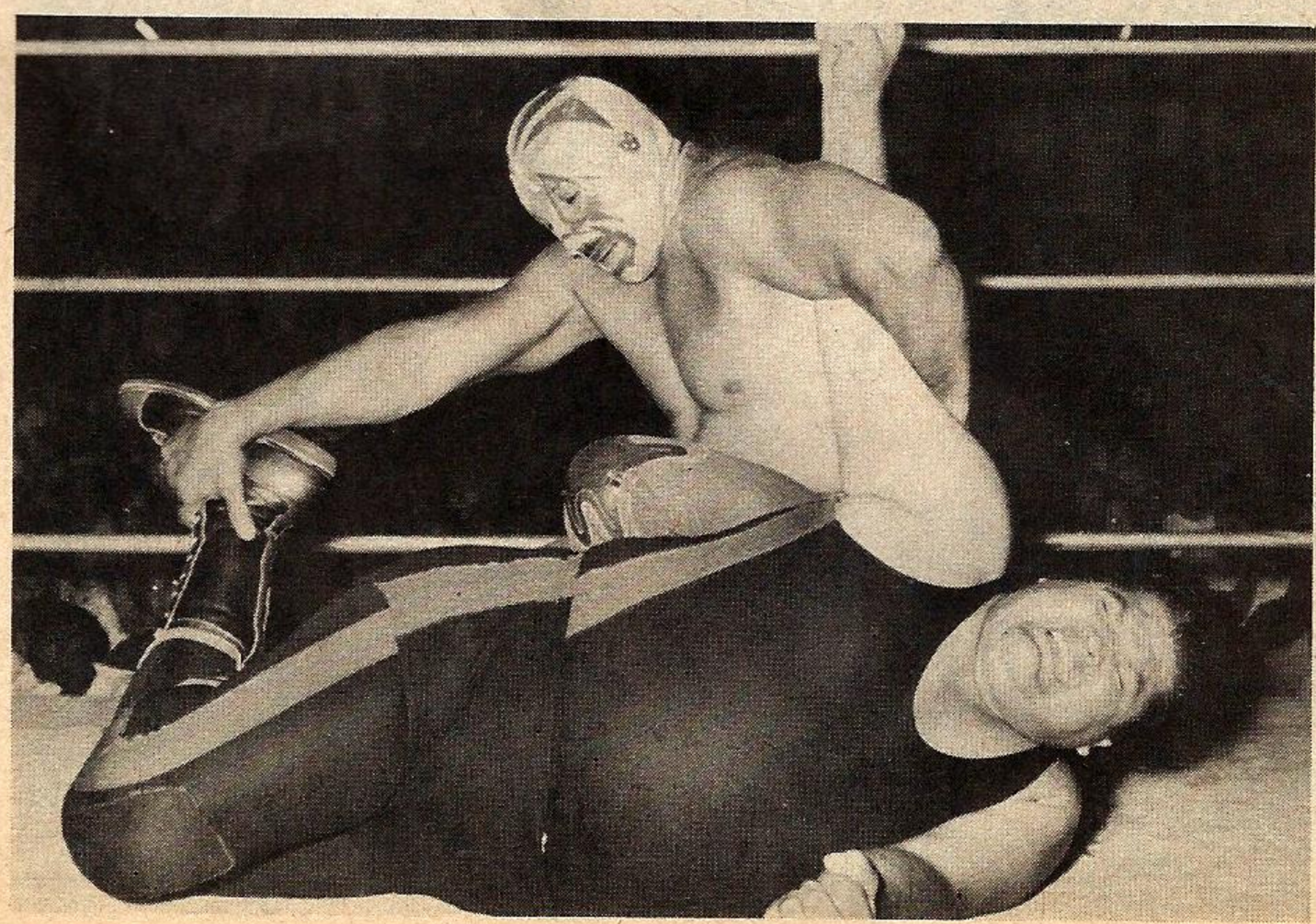
In the wrestling community, news travels fast. Even in Japan, Mil heard the doubts about his bravery and skill. As a professional, he knows what those kind of statements can do to a career. A man could be destroyed by bad opinions that everyone hears.

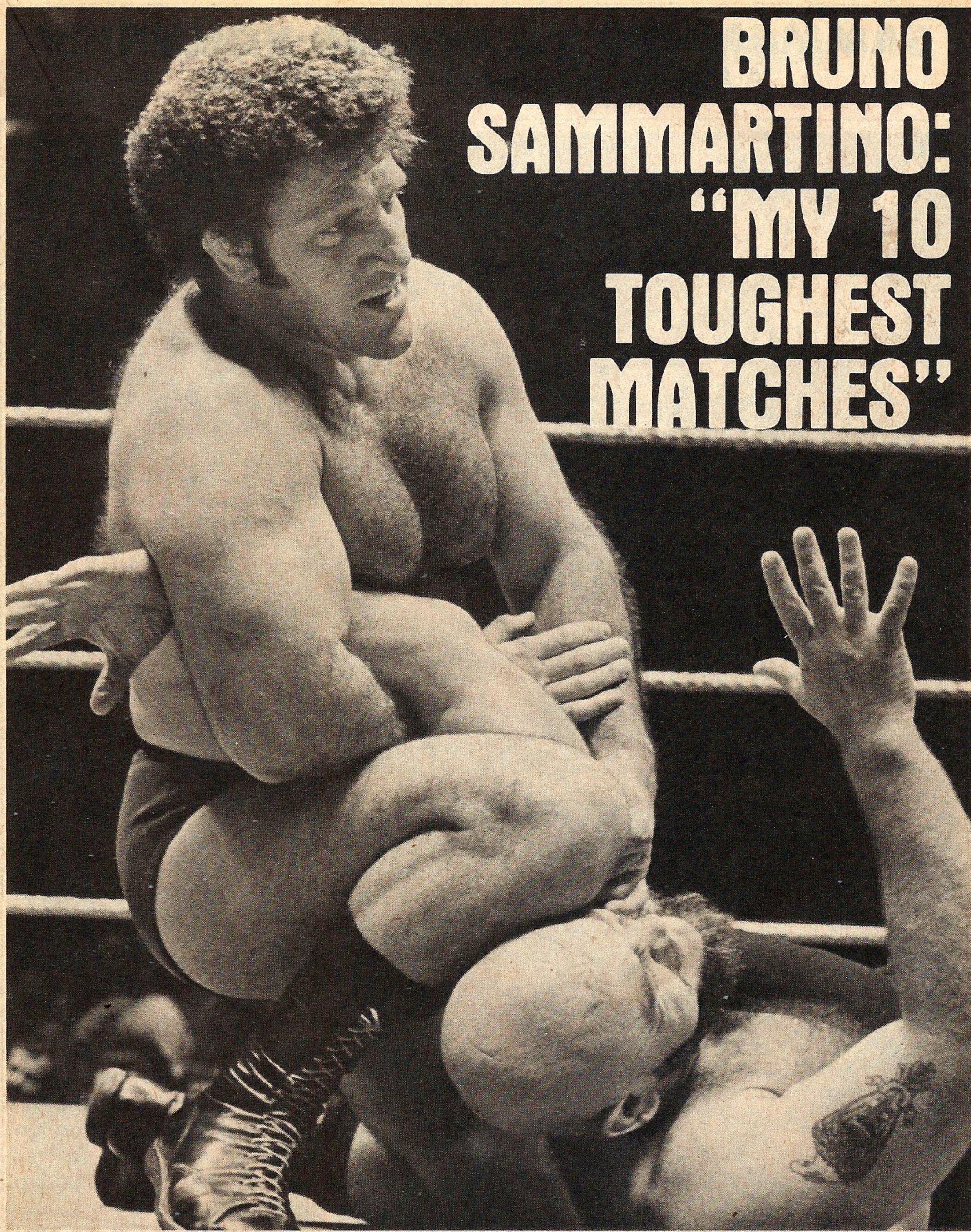
Mil immediately called a press conference. Through the slits of his mask, one could see eyes both worried and enraged.

"I've never run away from a foe in my life," Mil began softly. "I've been lucky that fans want to see me all over the world. I've got contracts that must be honored. Even if I wanted to say in a single area. I couldn't. My schedule has been worked out two years in advance.

"I'm not bragging when I say I'm one of the most famous wrestlers in the world; that's a fact. This means that every professional wrestler knows about me. They can and do study films of my bouts. The first time I wrestle an opponent, he knows much more about me

(Continued on page 53)





BRUNO SAMMARTINO: "MY 10 TOUGHEST MATCHES"

STOP ANY PERSON on the street and mention professional wrestling. If you encounter a fan, he's liable to talk endlessly about wrestlers and personal memories.

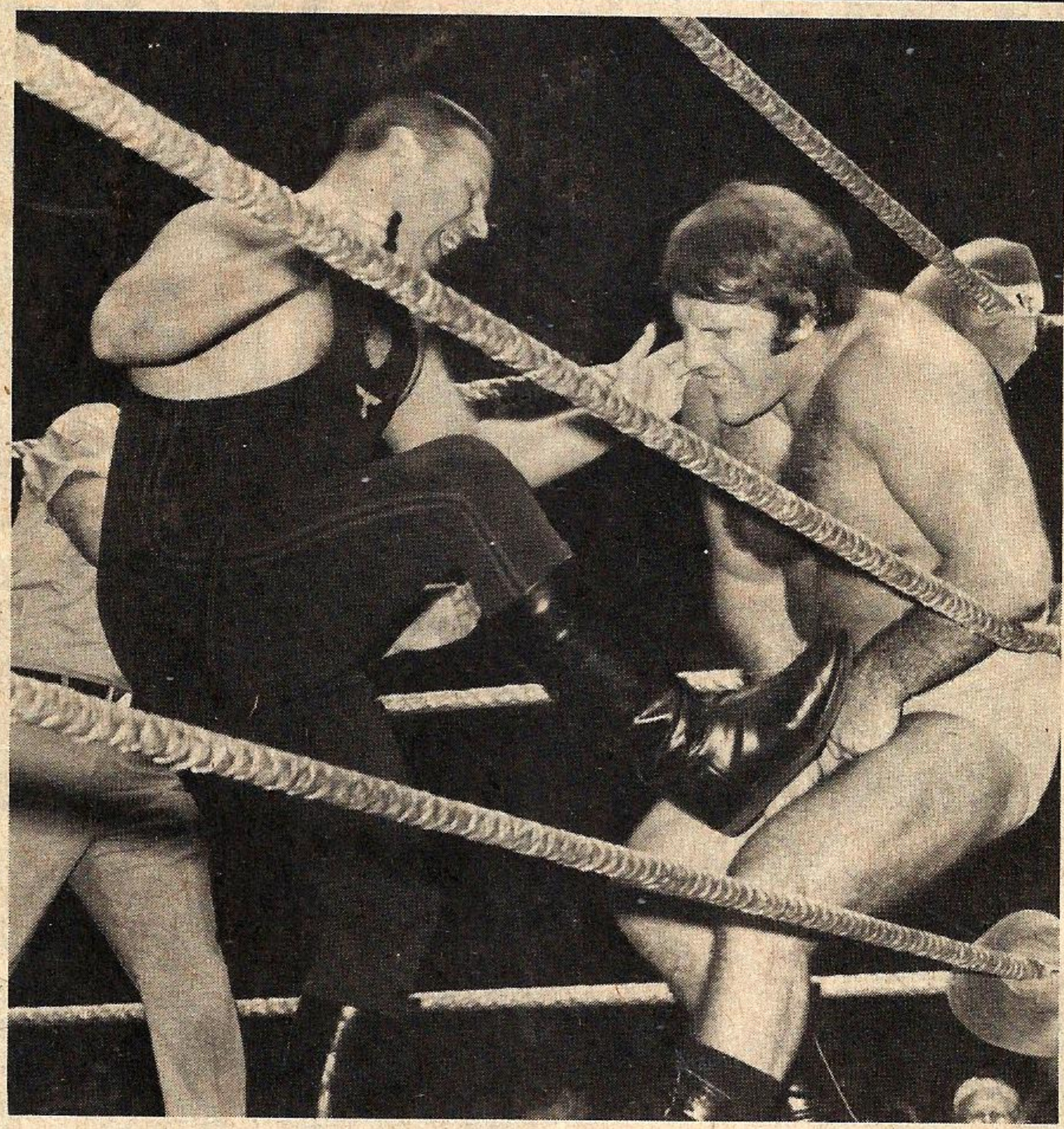
What if you stop a non-fan? Ask him about pro wrestling and you'll receive a blank look. Ask him to mention one name associated with wrestling, watch the eyes brighten and the lips form: Bruno Sammartino.

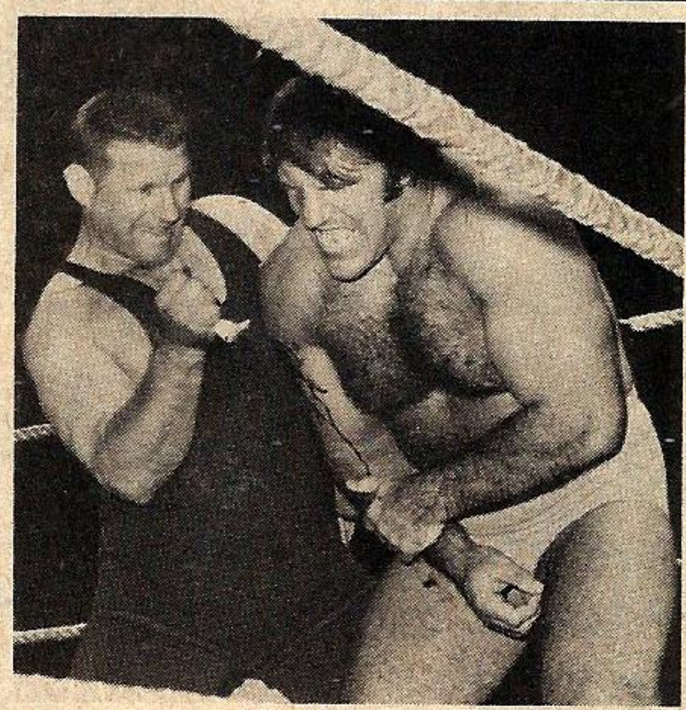
Bruno Sammartino transcends wrestling in a manner

(Continued on page 56)

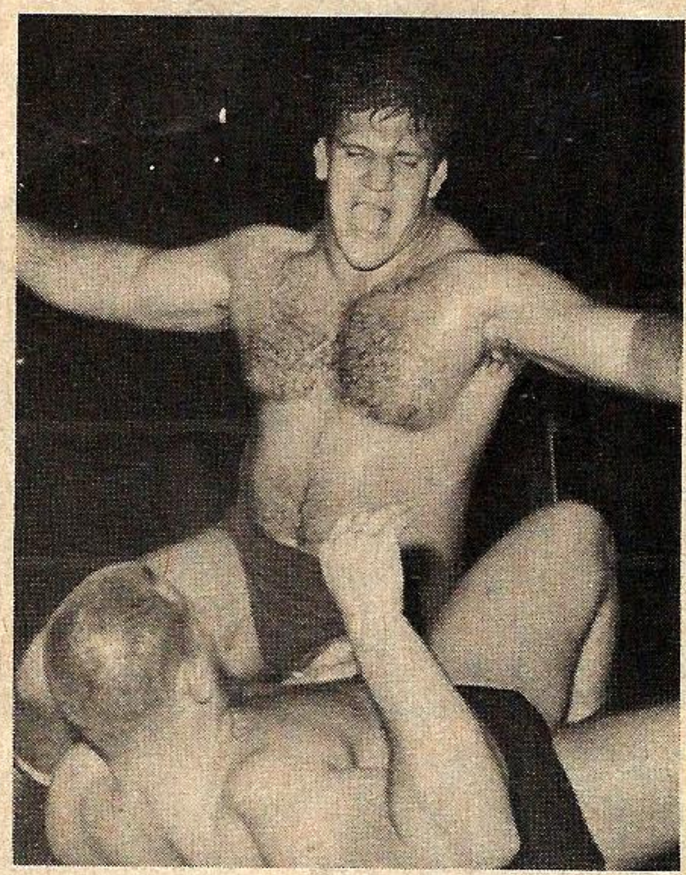
SAMMARTINO VS. WALDO VON ERICH

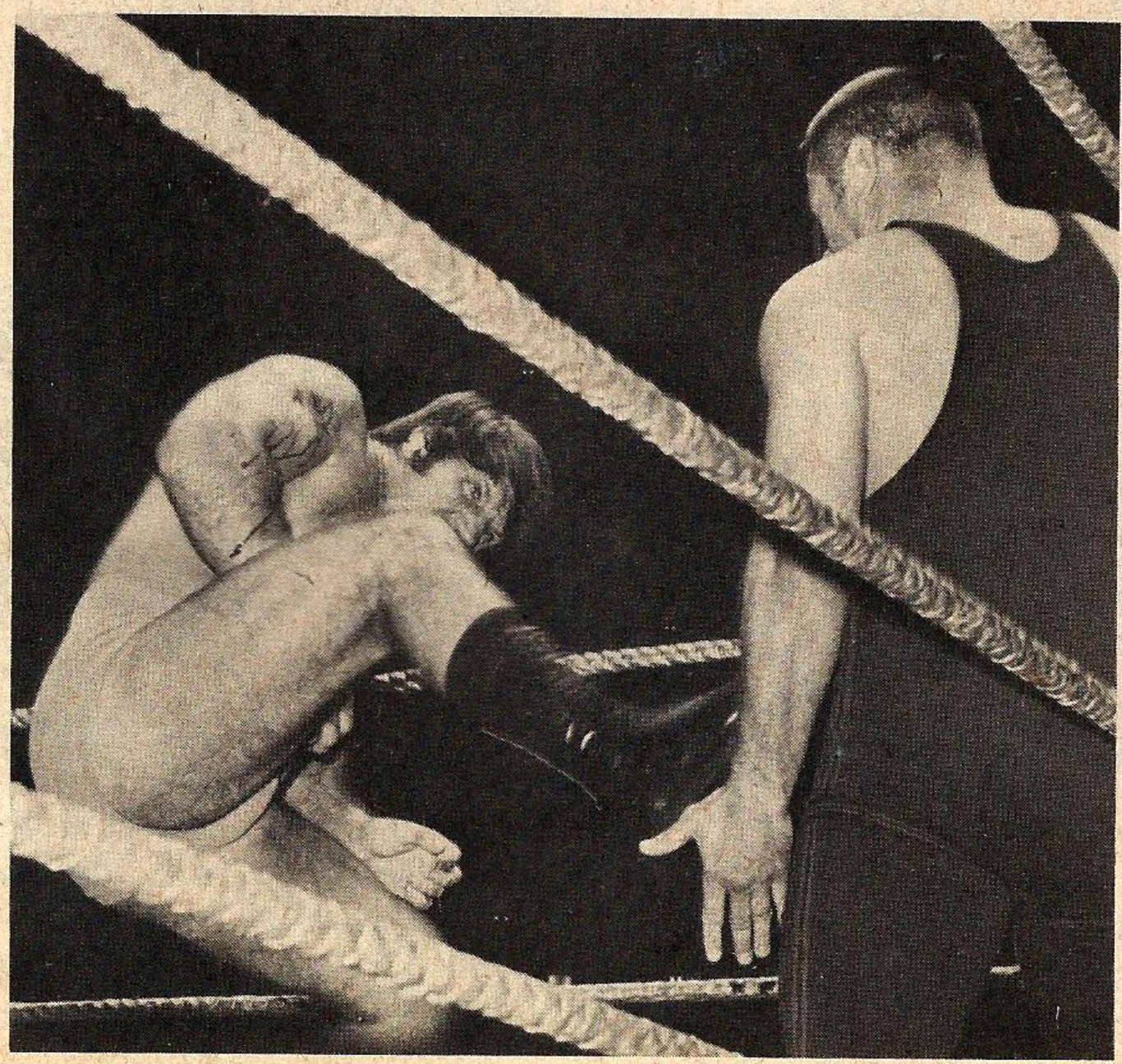
"A Monster Who Had To Be Destroyed"





Left: Von Erich kicks Bruno below the waist. Above: Von Erich's can opener slashes Bruno's arm. Below left: Waldo is wide open for attack. Below: Bruno collapses on Von Erich for an attempted pin.





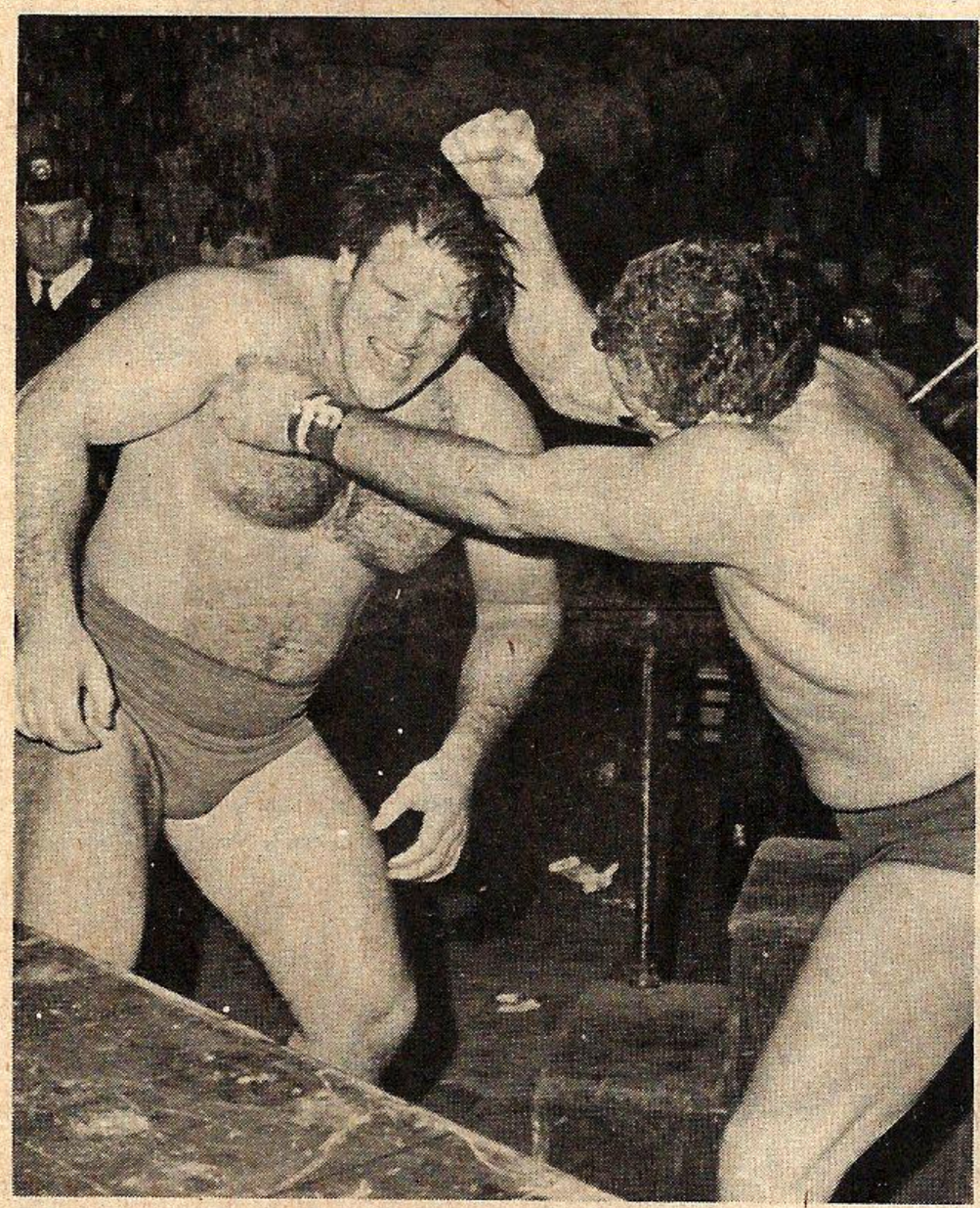
That filthy creep never knew when to quit. That's what I remember most. Even when the referee disqualified the bum, he went on and on, picking up chairs, foreign objects and any other weapon he could find to smash on my head.

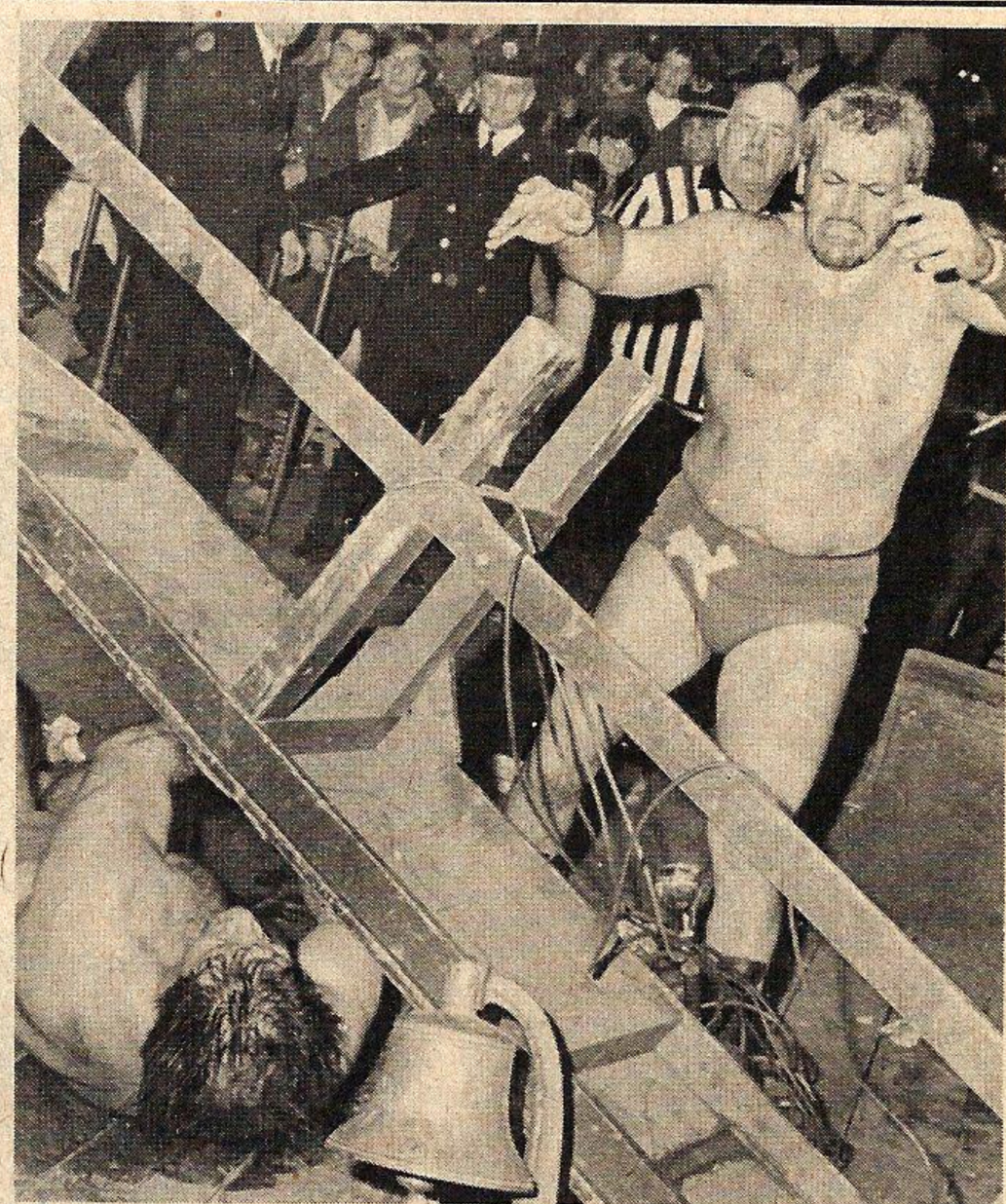
Doggone, one time that bum brought a can opener into the ring and nearly cut off my arm. What was I, a can of tuna? I couldn't lift my arm

(Continued on page 56)

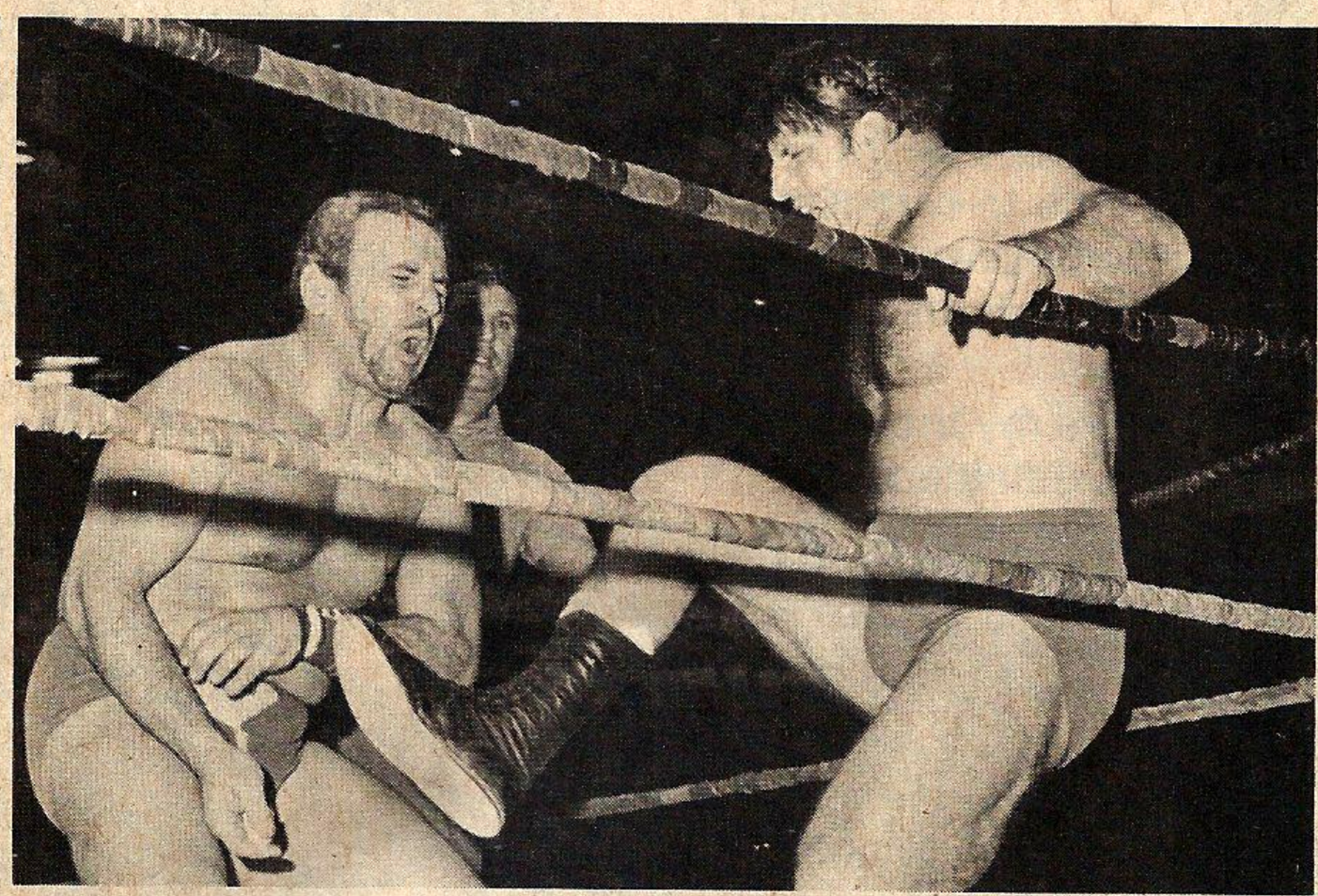
SAMMARTINO VS. THE SHEIK

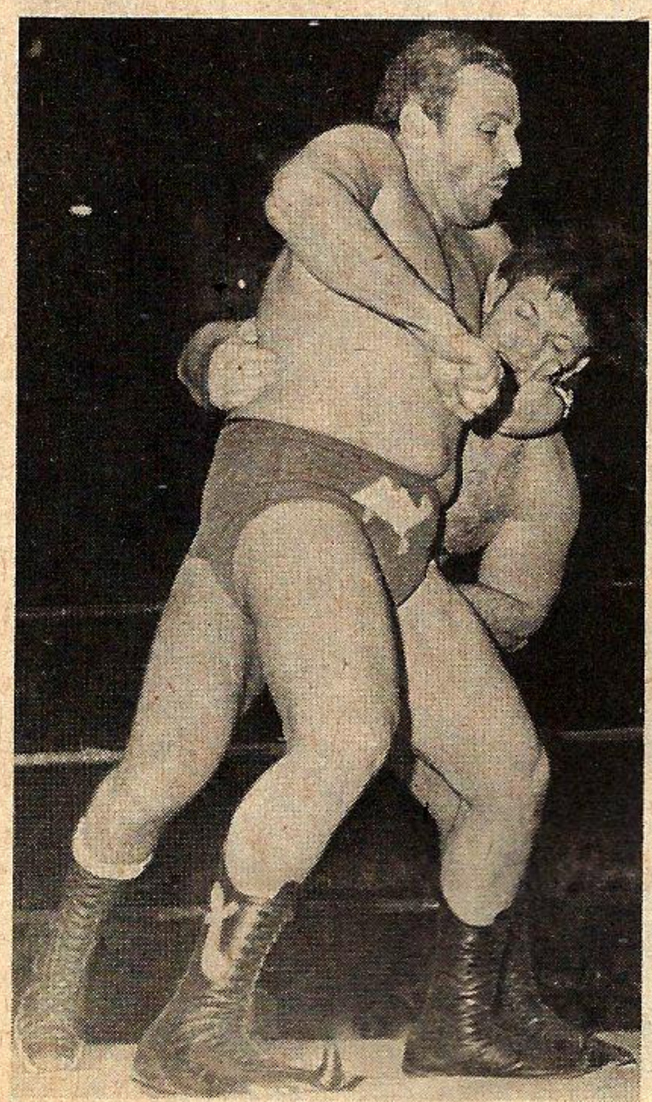
"The Night I Wrestled A Maniac"





Above: The Sheik pounds the top of Bruno's head. Above right: The maniacal Arab drops a press table on Bruno. Right: Bruno's foot catches The Sheik in the midsection. Below: Bruno will easily escape The Sheik's headlock by propelling him across the ring.





You know, maybe it's the sand that guy eats or the camels he hangs around with, but, doggone, he's a nut! I don't know how he does it, but that fire he shoots out of his body could burn a guy up.

First time I wrestled The Sheik, he nearly scorched all the hair off my body. Ever smell hair burning? Disgusting. Anyway, this guy yells some strange foreign word, I don't know, sounds Arabic or something, and charges me. I did a double-

(Continued on page 57)

SAMMARTINO VS. IVAN KOLOFF

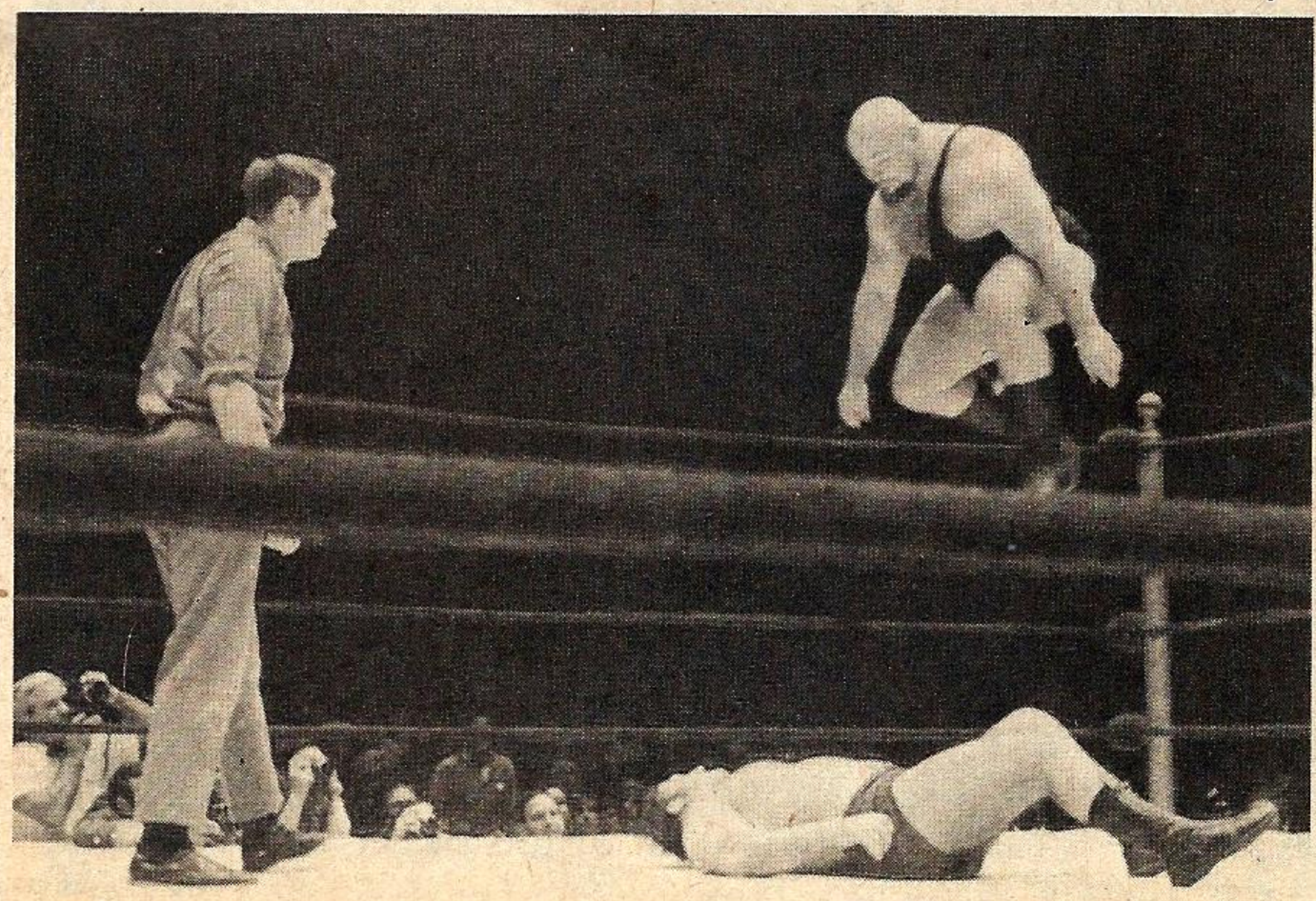
"The Night I Lost My Title"

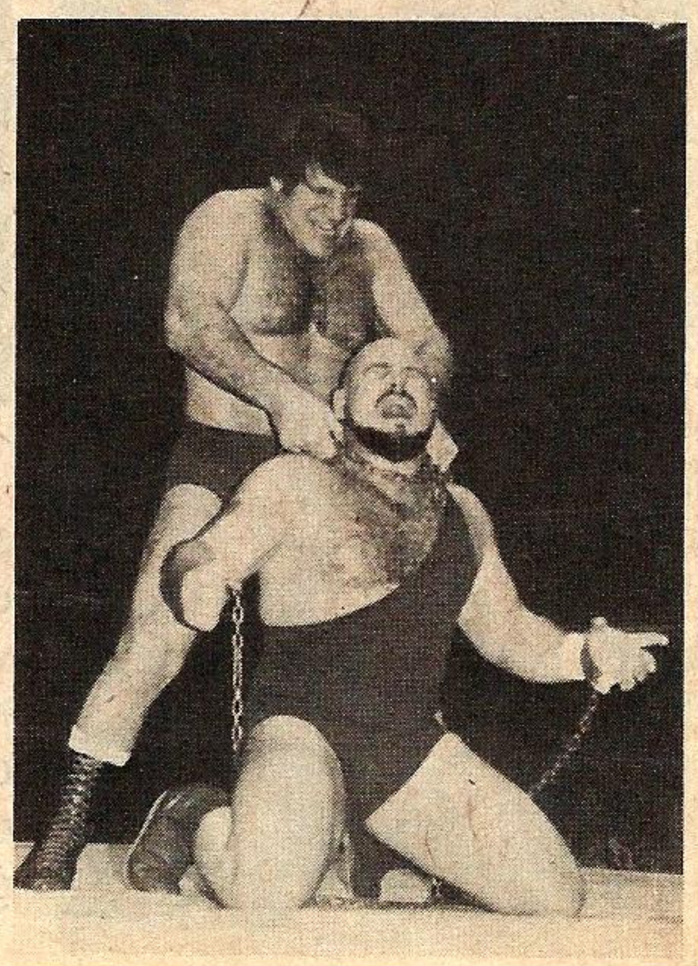
Of all my matches, I can never forget the night I lost the WWF title to Ivan Koloff. He climbed onto the top rope, smashed on me and pinned me.

What were my thoughts as I lay there, defeated? I don't know if I had thoughts at that exact moment. I just felt drained, wthout any emotion. I'd lost. You know, losing is such a traumatic experience for an athlete. You work hard every single day to keep yourself in shape and boom, it all goes up in smoke in one minute, one

(Continued on page 58)

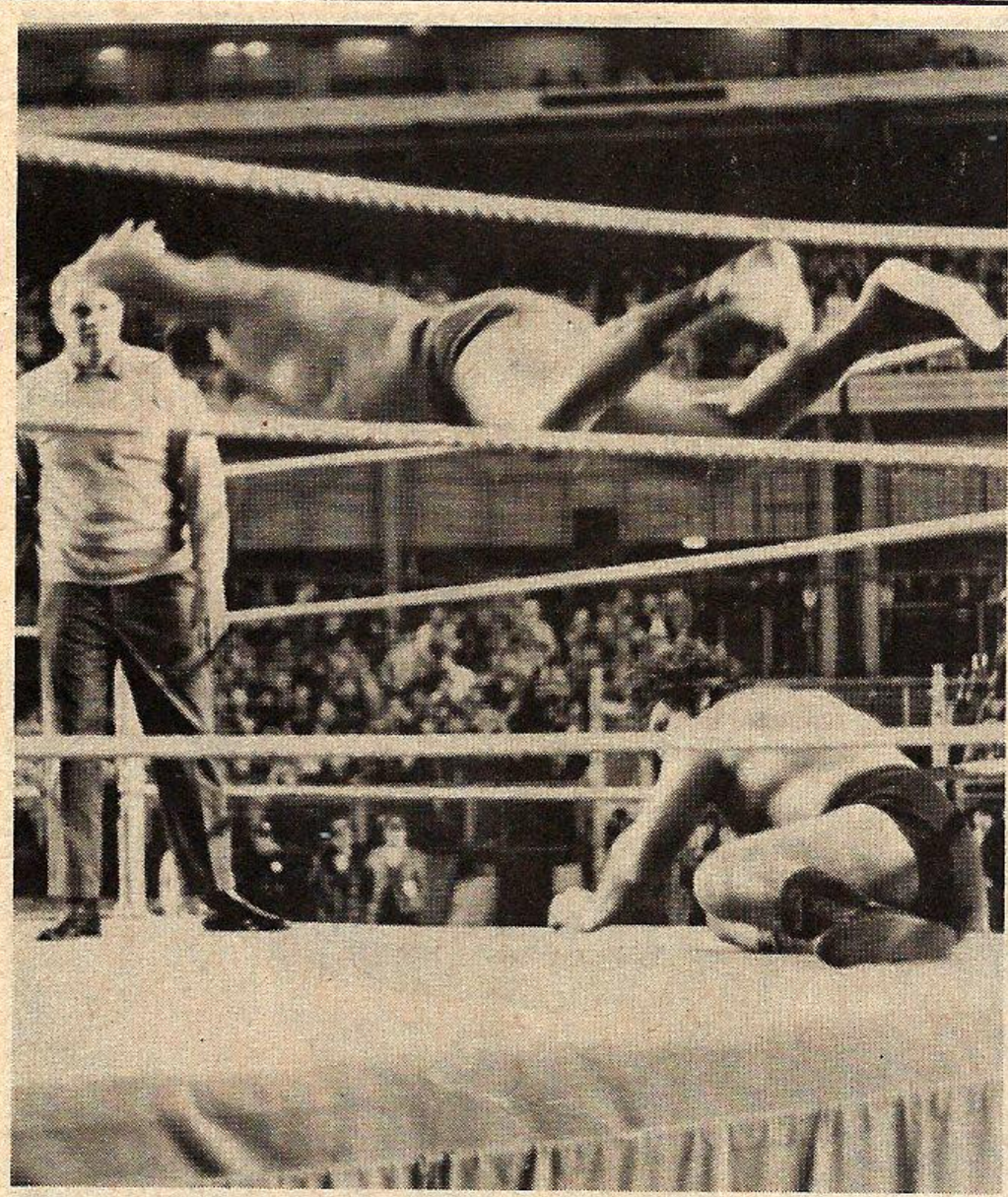
Above: Bruno traps Koloff in an armbar. Below left: A most memorable sight as Koloff drops upon Bruno, setting him up for the pin. Below: Bruno gets a measure of revenge in a chain match.

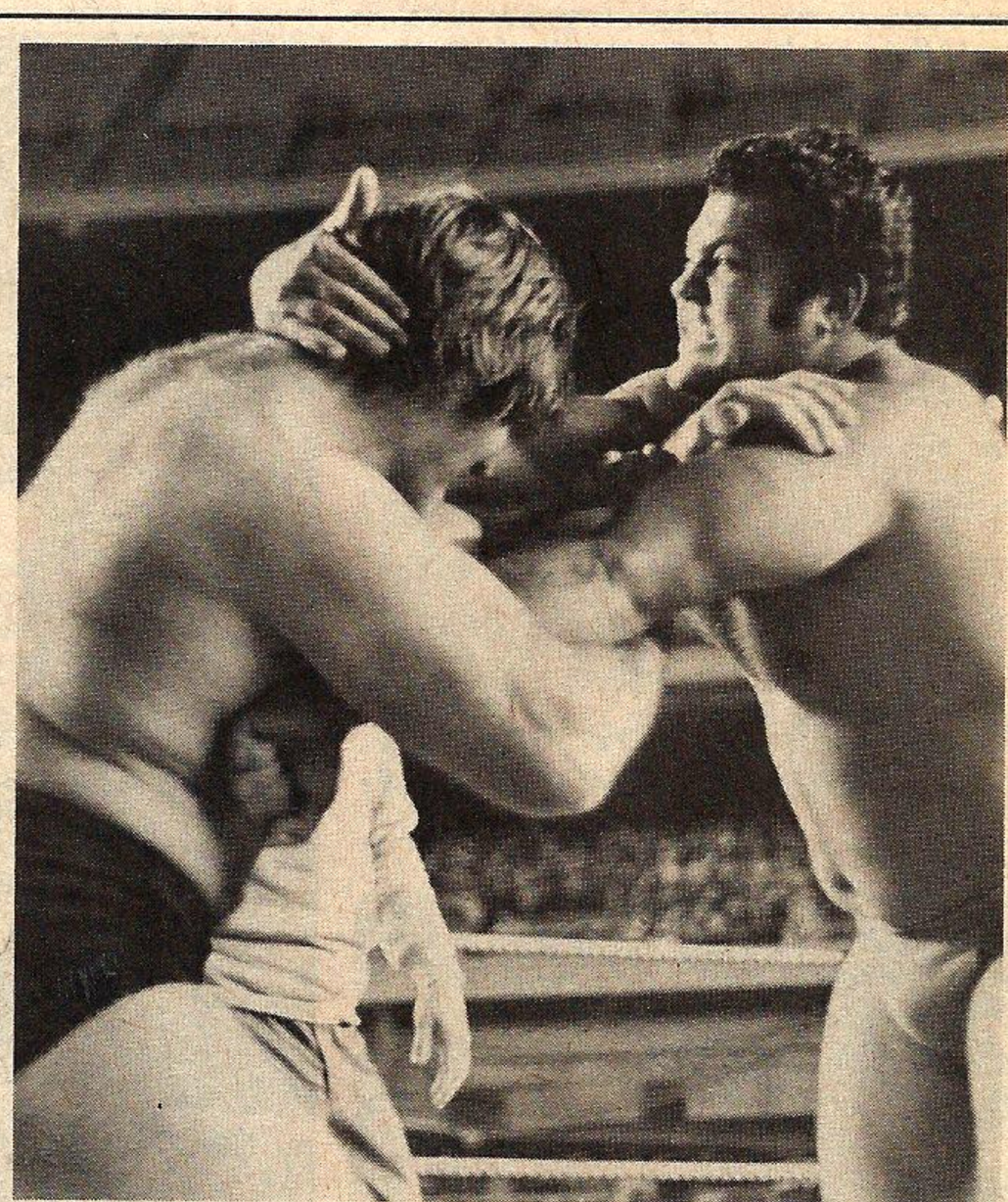


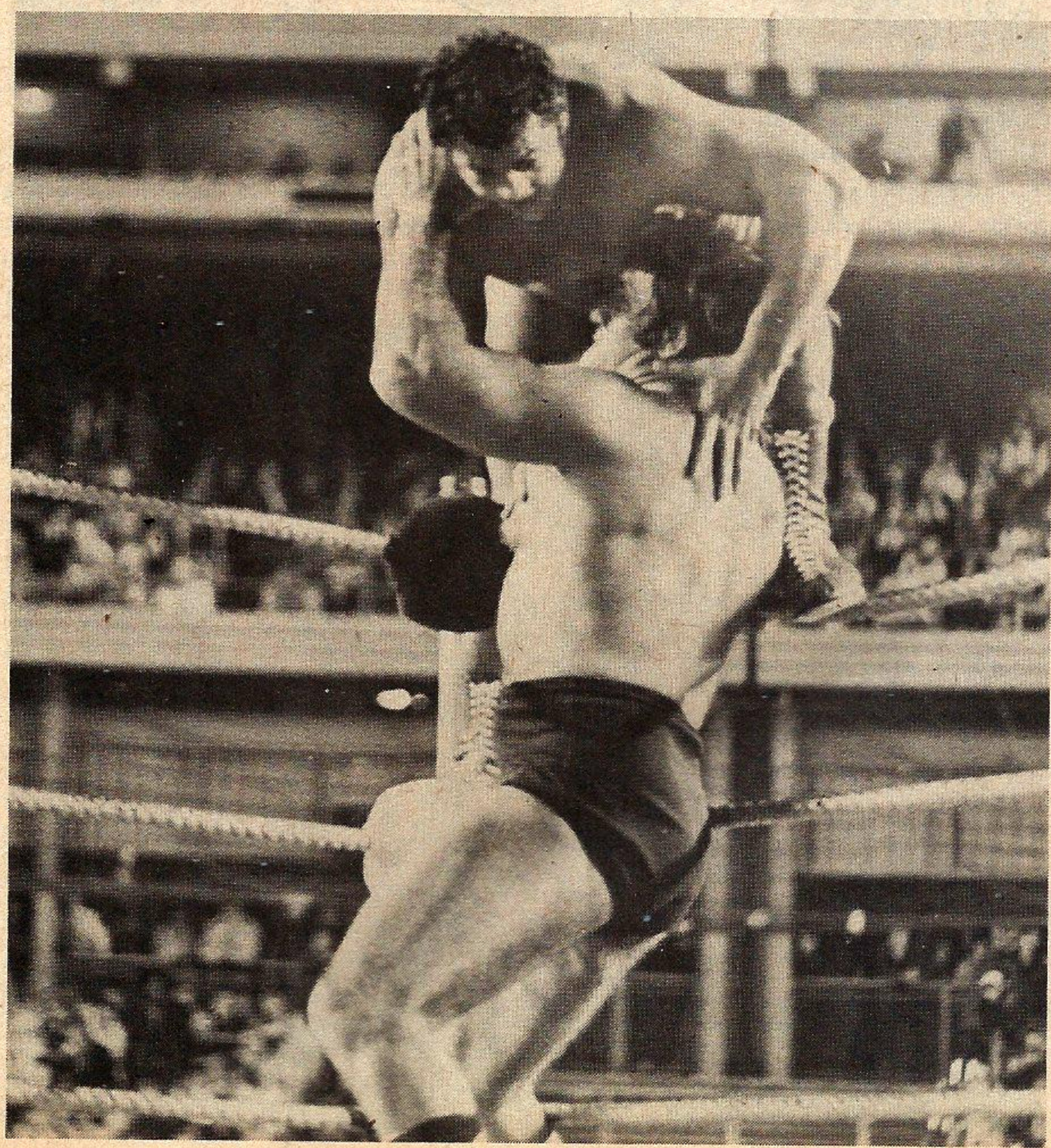


SAMMARTINO VS. PEDRO MORALES

"A Night Of Skill And Science"







Above left: Sammartino rolls away from Morales' attempted flying bodypress. Above: Bruno, in an unfamiliar challenger's role, locks up with the champion. Left: Bruno grabs Pedro off the top turnbuckle.

Could anyone forget what caused our match? Me and Pedro were wrestling Mr. Fuji and Professor Tanaka. One of those creeps threw salt into Pedro's face, blinding him. I ran in to help. Morales shoved me aside. I guess he thought I was one of the Japs. I tried to grab him again and he hit me. Doggone, I pushed a little to jolt him awake and Pedro hit me again. You know, I don't take that from anyone. Here I am helping a friend and the guy takes a poke at me. Today I know it was a misunderstanding, but at the time, I was angry.

We settled the score at

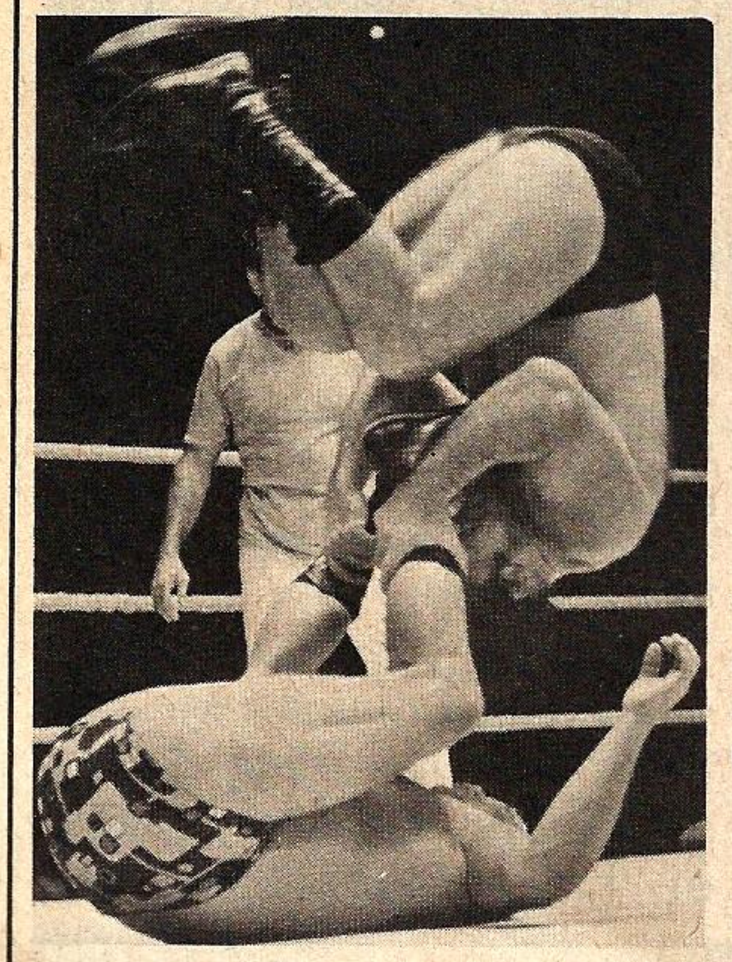
(Continued on page 58)

SAMMARTINO VS. HARLEY RACE

"My Only Match For The NWA Title"

When I wrestled Harley Race in 1973, he was NWA champion, though the WWF title was around another man's waist. Still, I'd always wanted to wrestle for the NWA belt. I'd seen Race both in person and on television, and I thought a match would be interesting. Two different styles, different pesonalities.

We had a best two-of-three fall, one-hour time limit war. Each fall required the most punishing, demanding pace



I'd ever undergone. I had to be absolutely tip-top. Every move by Race alerted me. I had to be very careful. I tell you, this Race was some tough cookie.

After the first two falls, the match was even. Doggone, every muscle in my body ached. But I knew as much as I hurt, Race had to be hurting every bit as much. Maybe a little more.

That third fall may have been the toughest fall in my

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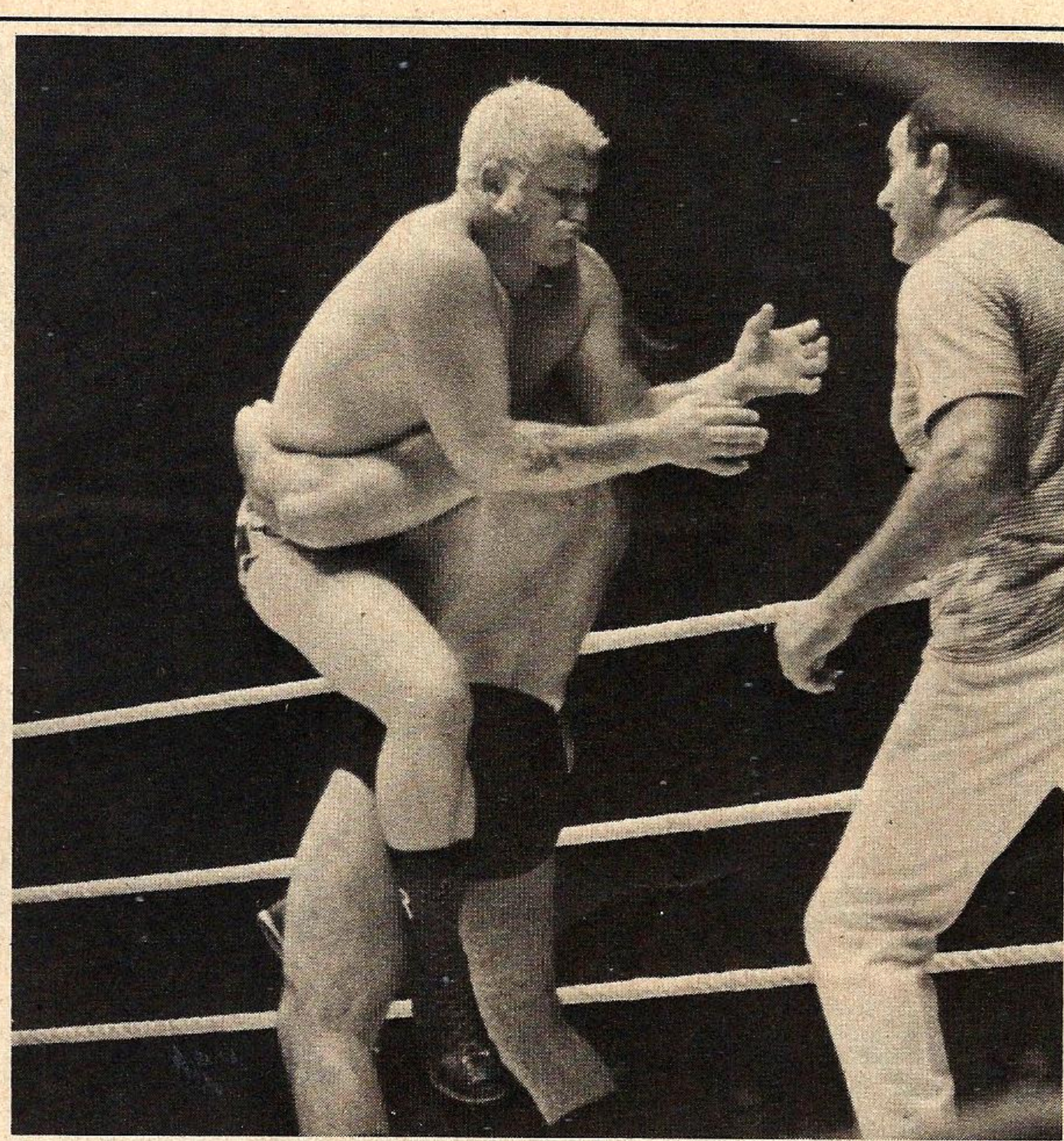
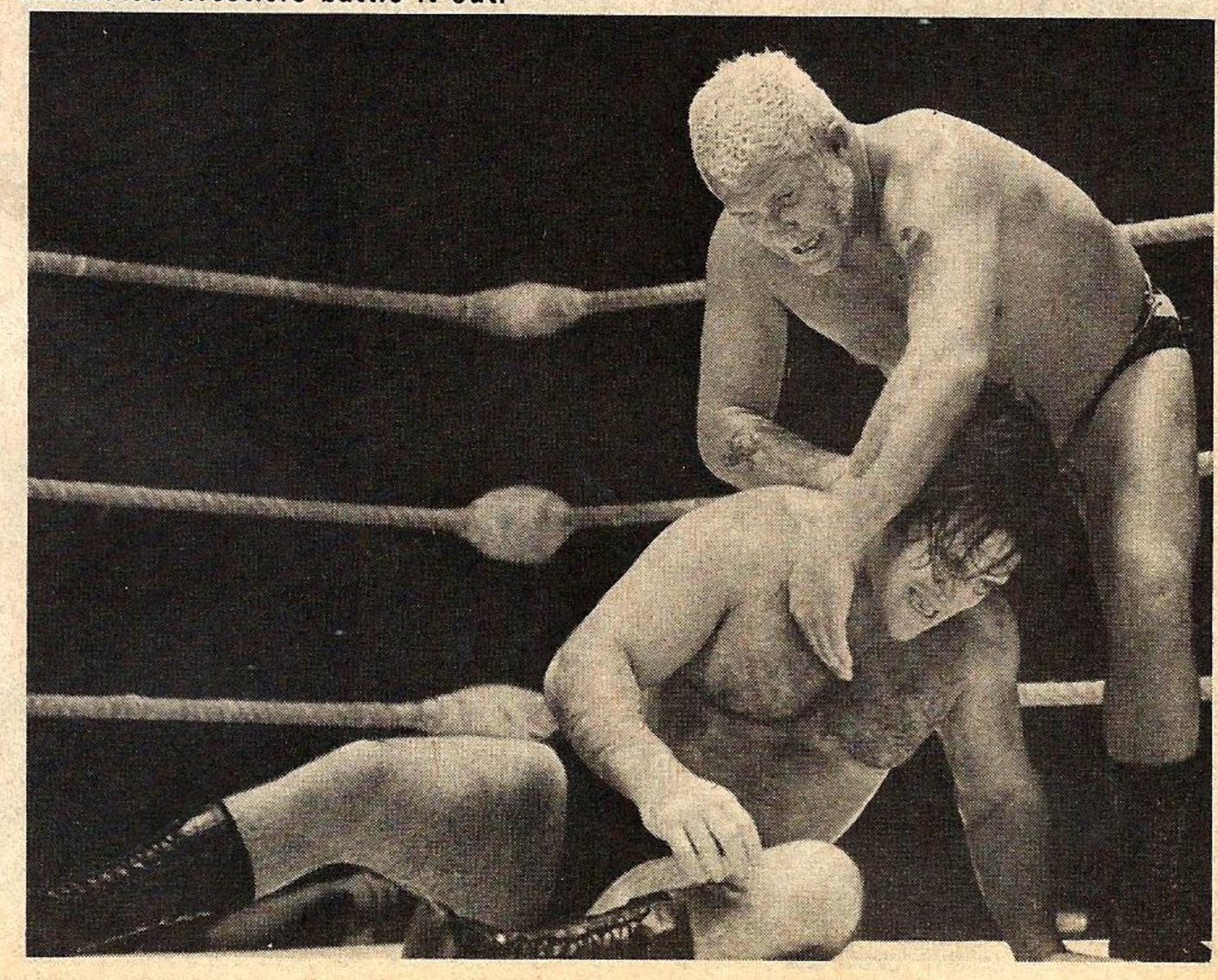


Though Bruno has wrestled the majority of his career in the WWF area, he always had a dream of winning the NWA belt and eventually uniting all federations. Left: Bruno tries in vain to sunset flip Race. Above: Race would not submit to the bearhug. Below: Two exhausted wrestlers battle it out.



SAMMARTINO VS. STAN STASIAK

"I Survive The Heartpunch And Regain My Title"

The heart punch! Any guy willing to use a move like that has to be a little bent, if you know what I mean. I could never figure that guy Stasiak. Deep down, I don't think he's all that bad. But when the two of us would meet, well, bodies would fly all over the ring.

Stasiak's a big guy which gave him a lot of leverage over me. I had to duck, feint, and use my strength against Stasiak. Those matches were a real challenge. Always, always, you had to think about the heart punch.

Sometimes I'd be thinking about that lousy heart punch before I even got to the

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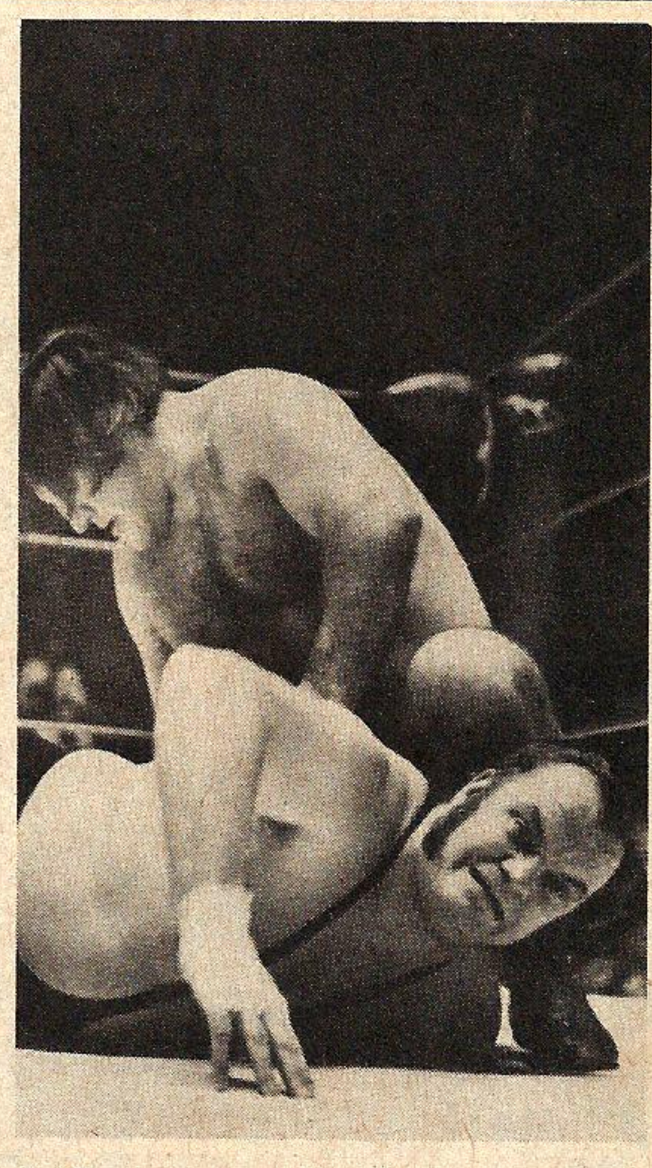
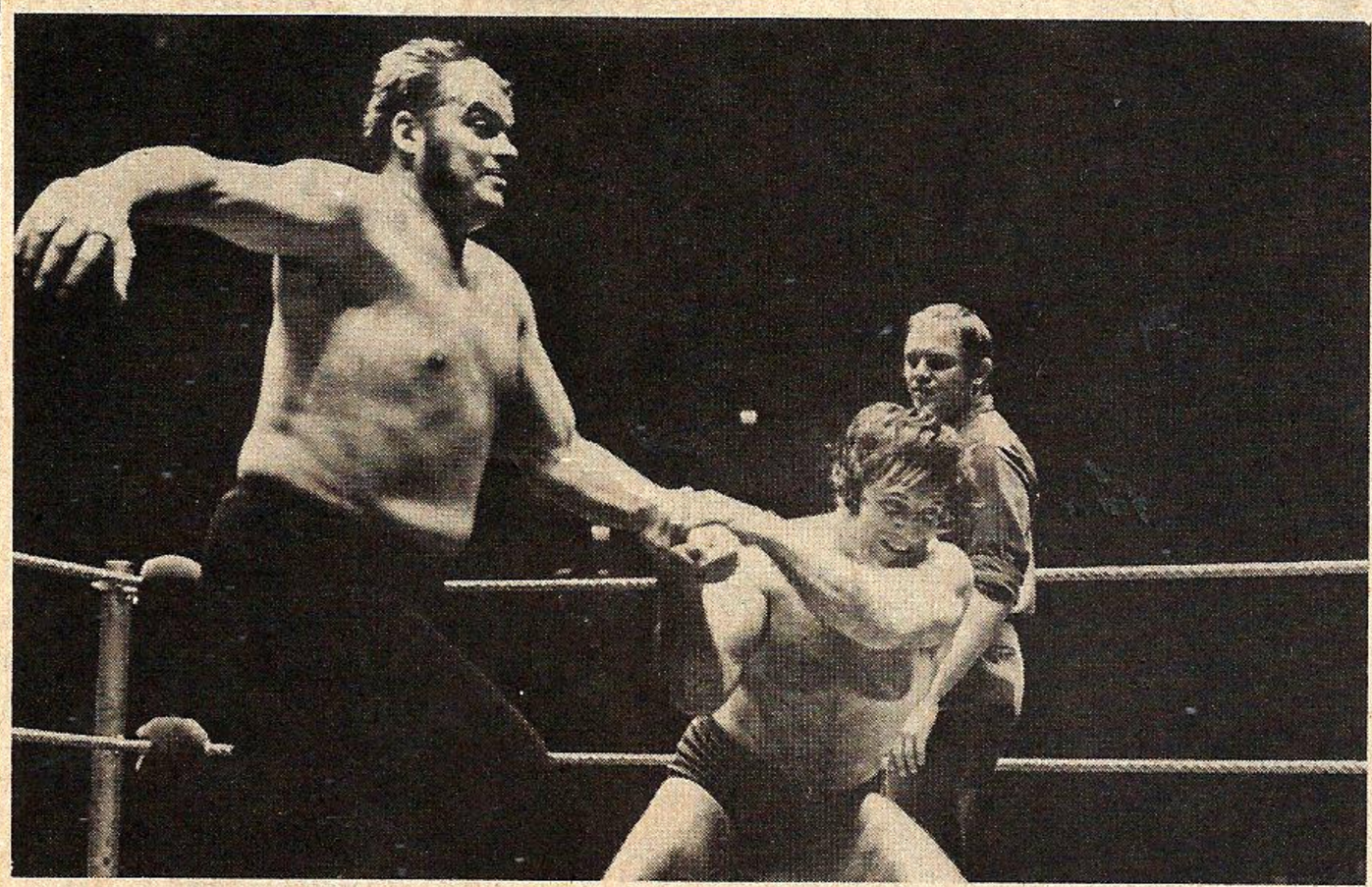
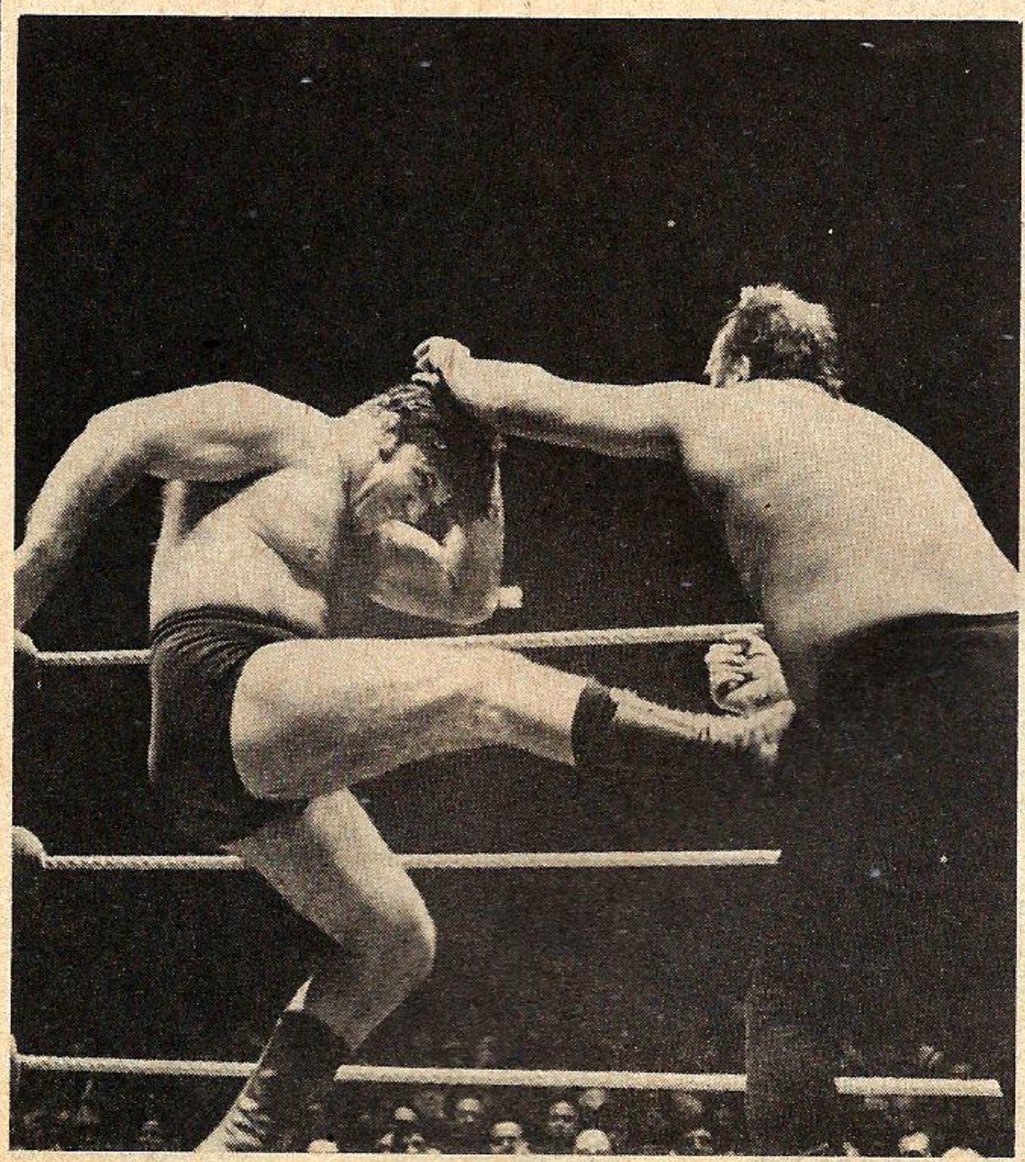
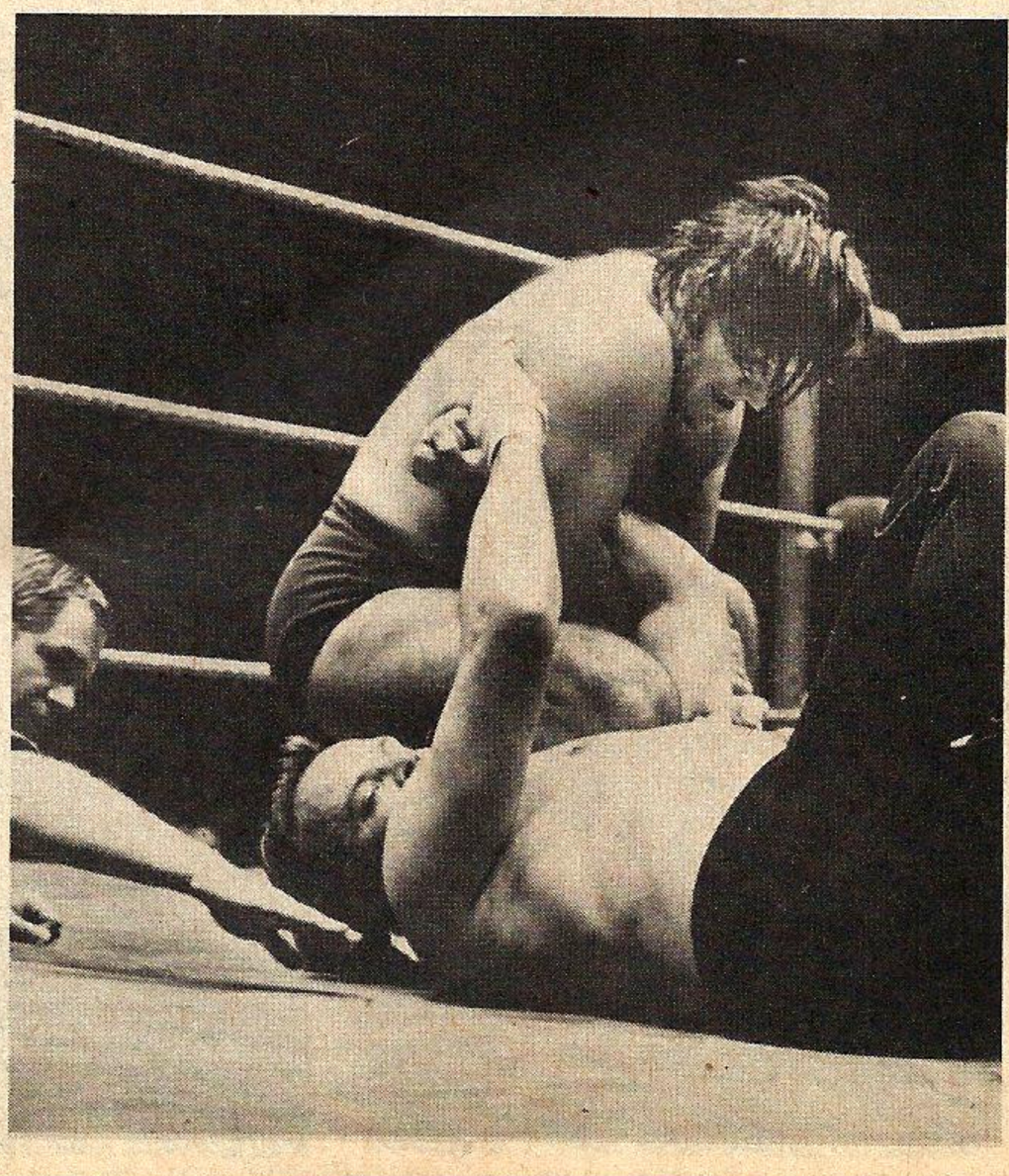




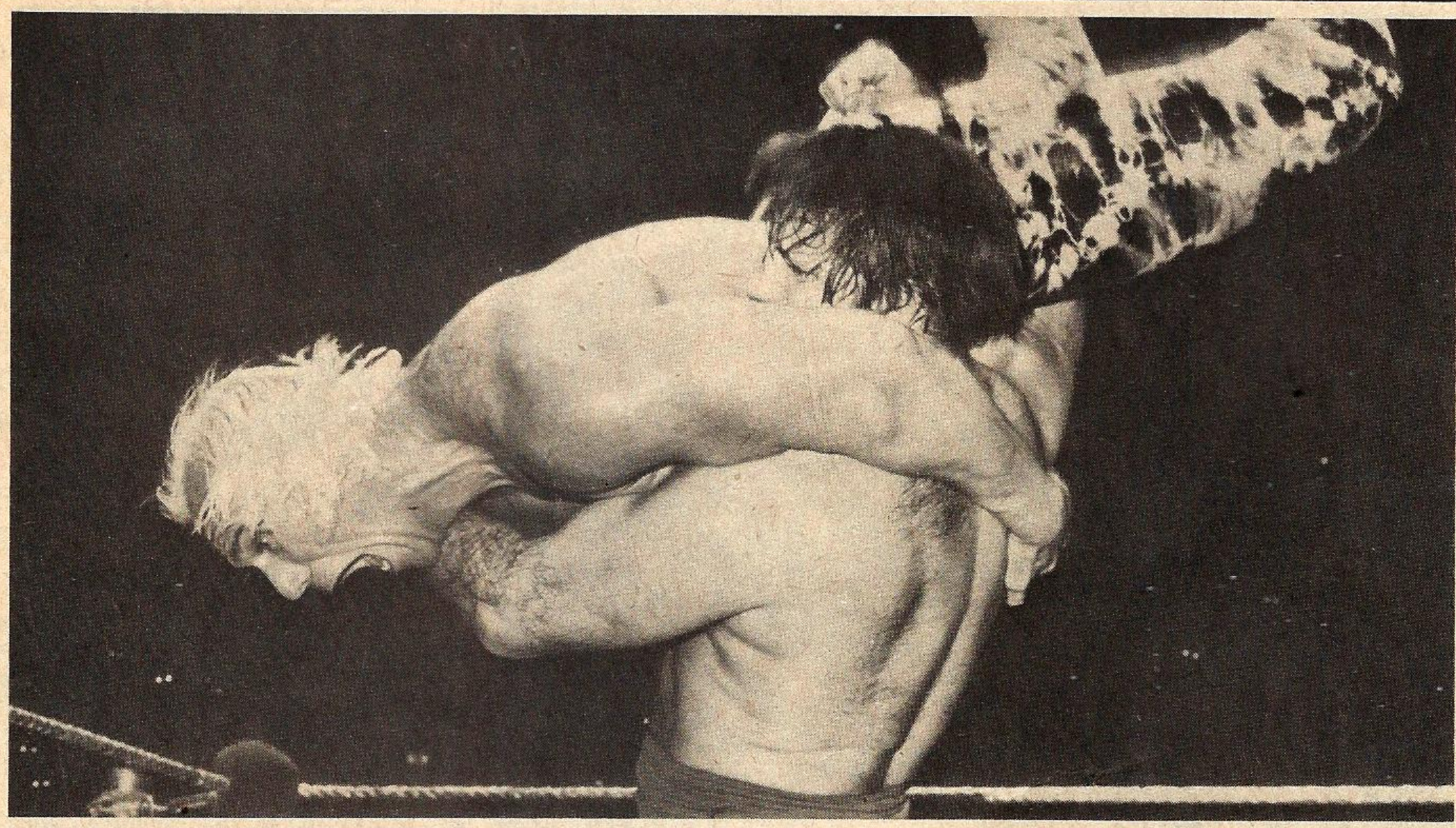
Left: Bruno uses all his strength to whip Stasiak into the turnbuckles. Above: The crowd chants as Bruno applies pressure to the hammerlock. Below left: Bruno kicks Stasiak in the mid-section before Stan could implement his feared heart punch. Below: The refereee checks to see if Stasiak's shoulders are in contact with the mat.

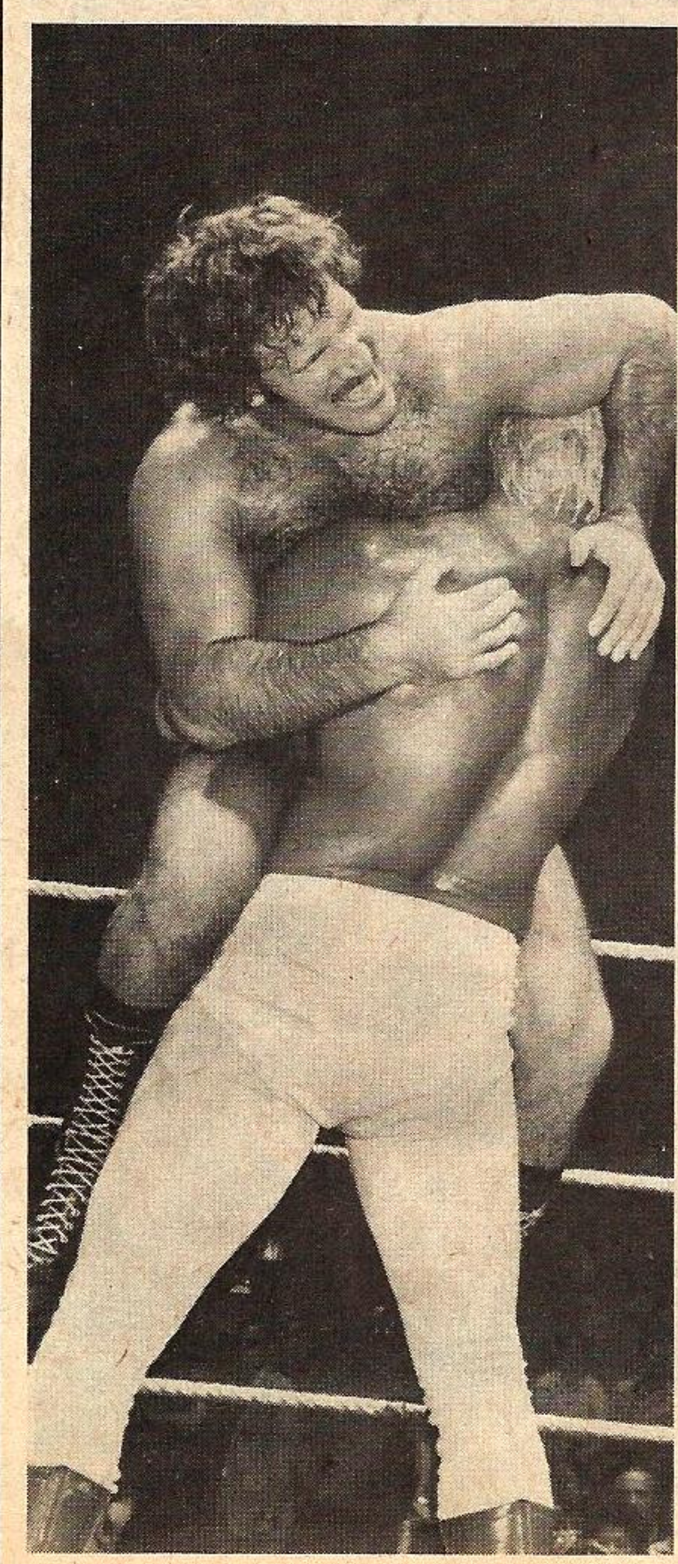




SAMMARTINO VS. SUPERSTAR GRAHAM

"My Championship Is Stolen In Baltimore"





Above: There is fear in Graham's eyes as Sammartino slams him to the mat. Left: Superstar claims his bearhug is more powerful than Bruno's. Below: Bruno won this test of strength in Baltimore, but he lost the match and his title.

I have the worst memories of Superstar Graham. After all, I lost my title to that bum in Baltimore. How could I not remember the punk who cheated my WWF title away?

That night is burnt into my memory. Sometimes I wake up sweating and shaking, reaching around the bed, thinking I'm still wrestling the goon. You know, I hate cheaters. I hate bums who

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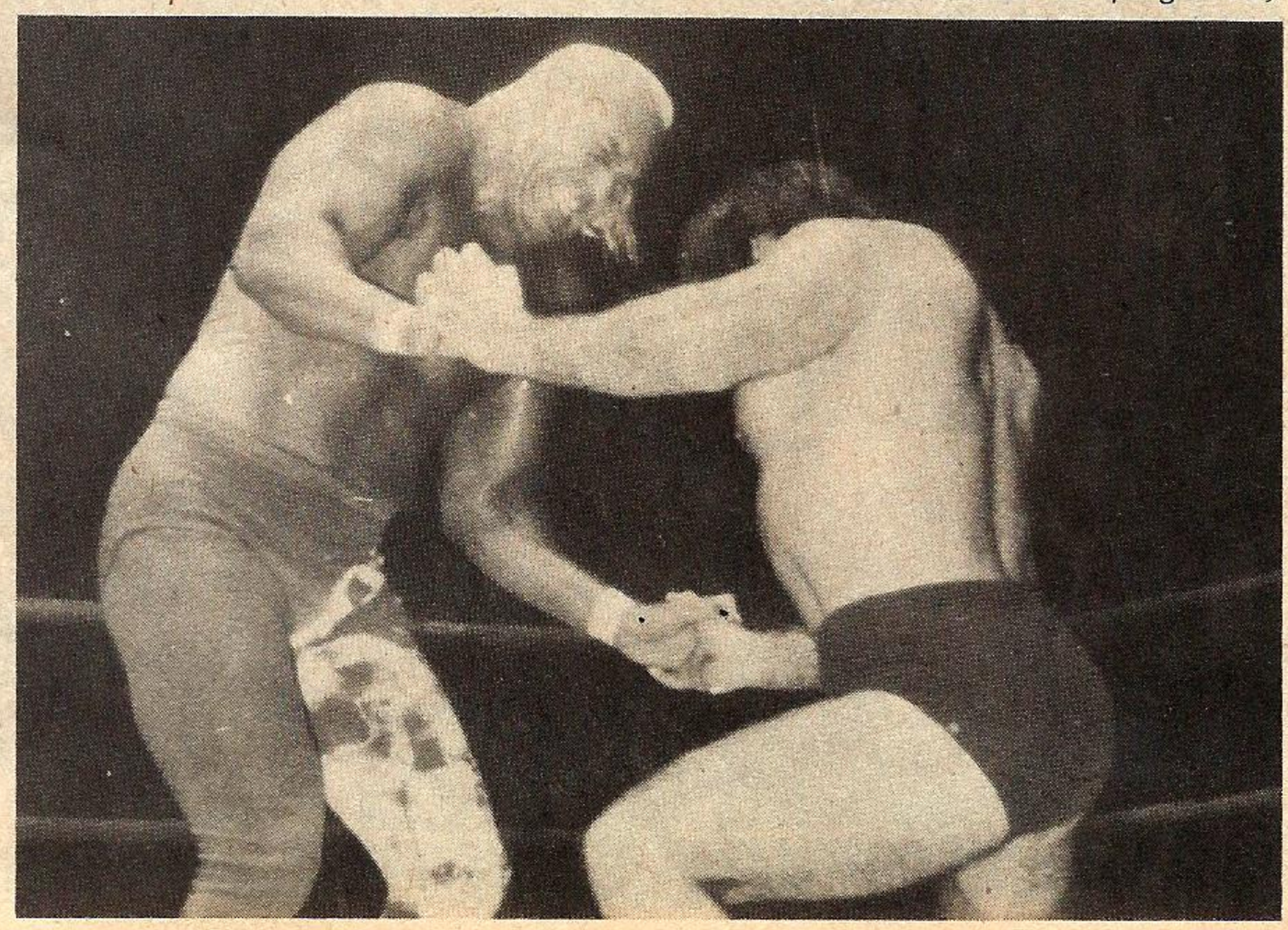
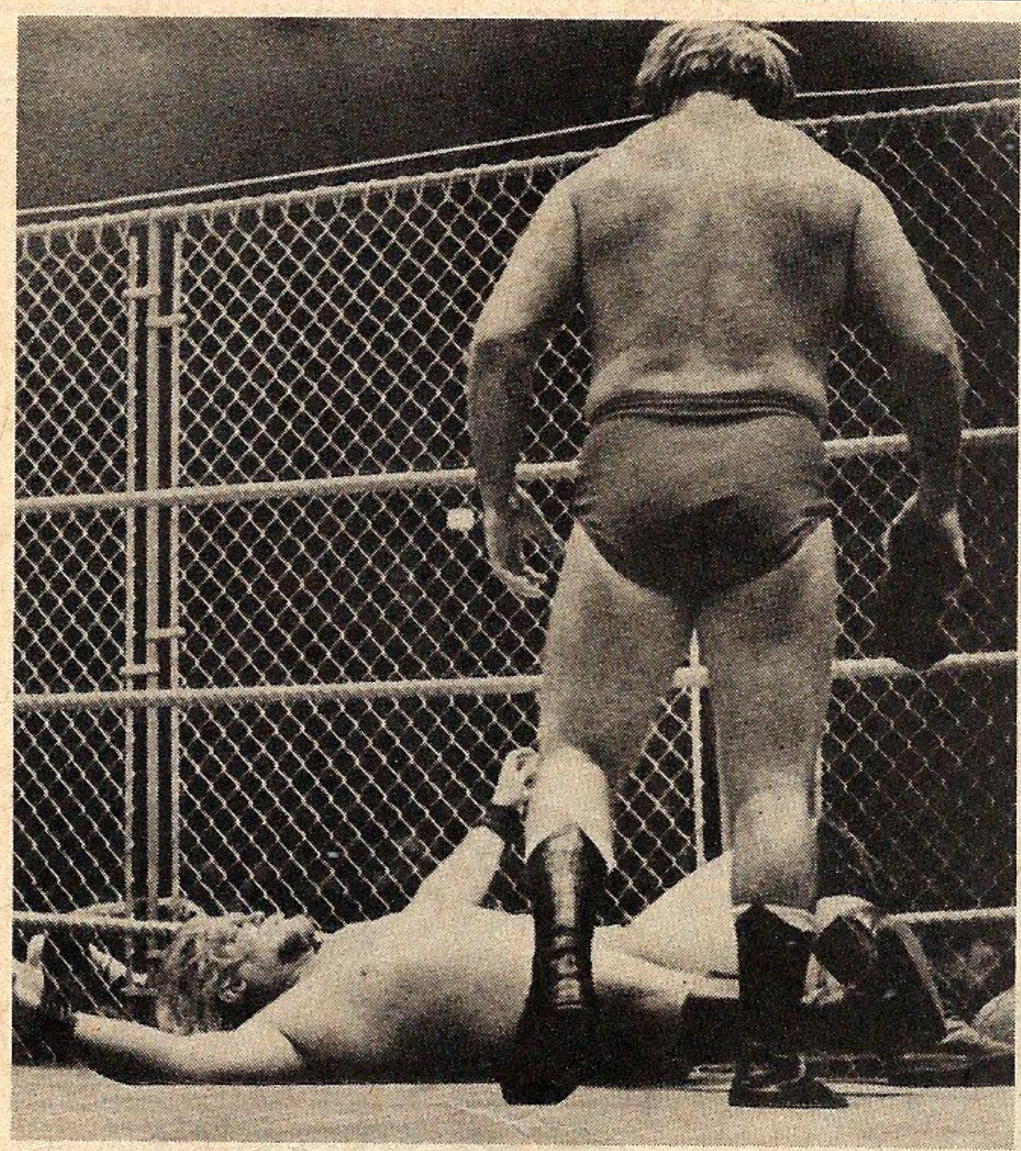
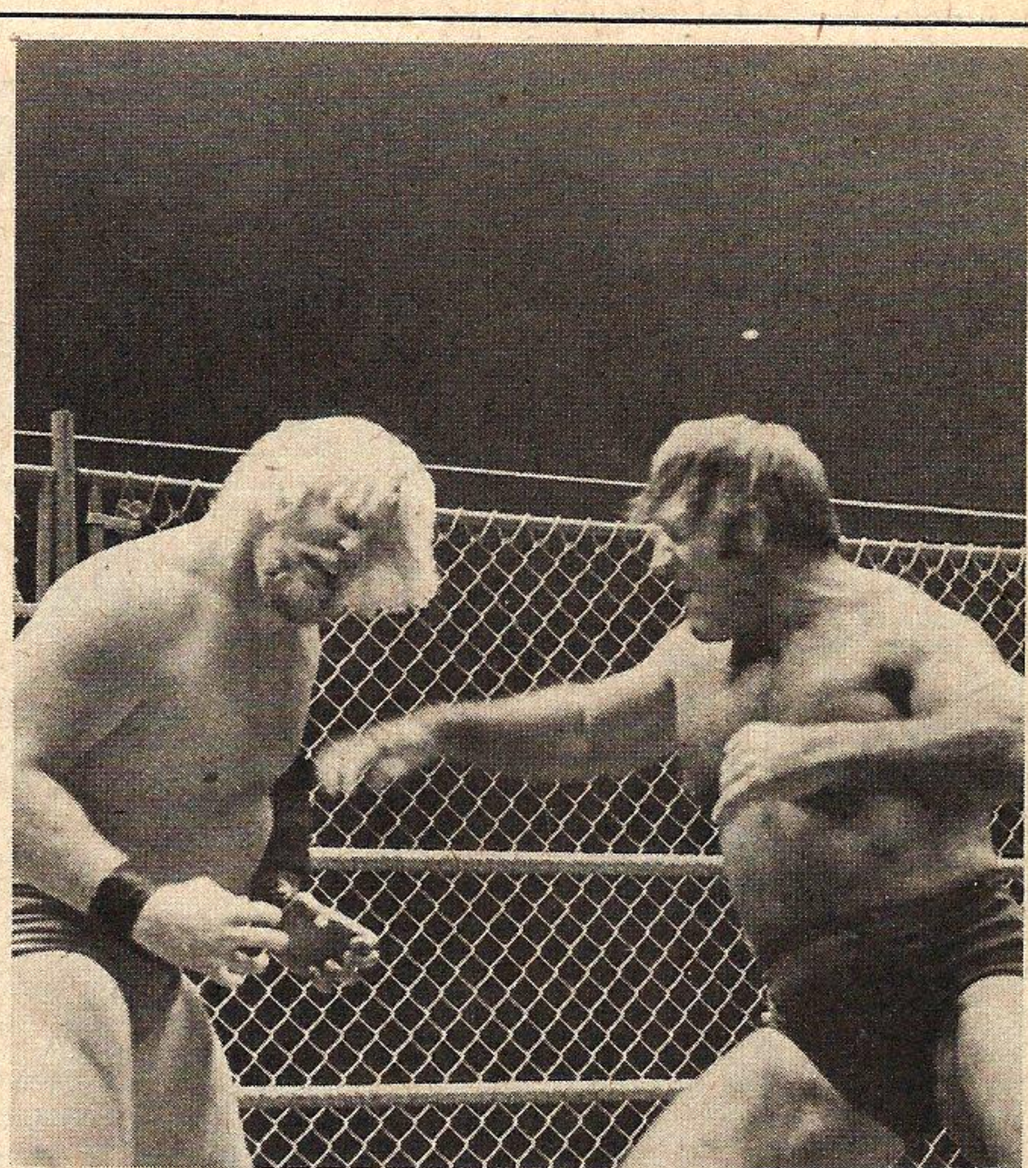


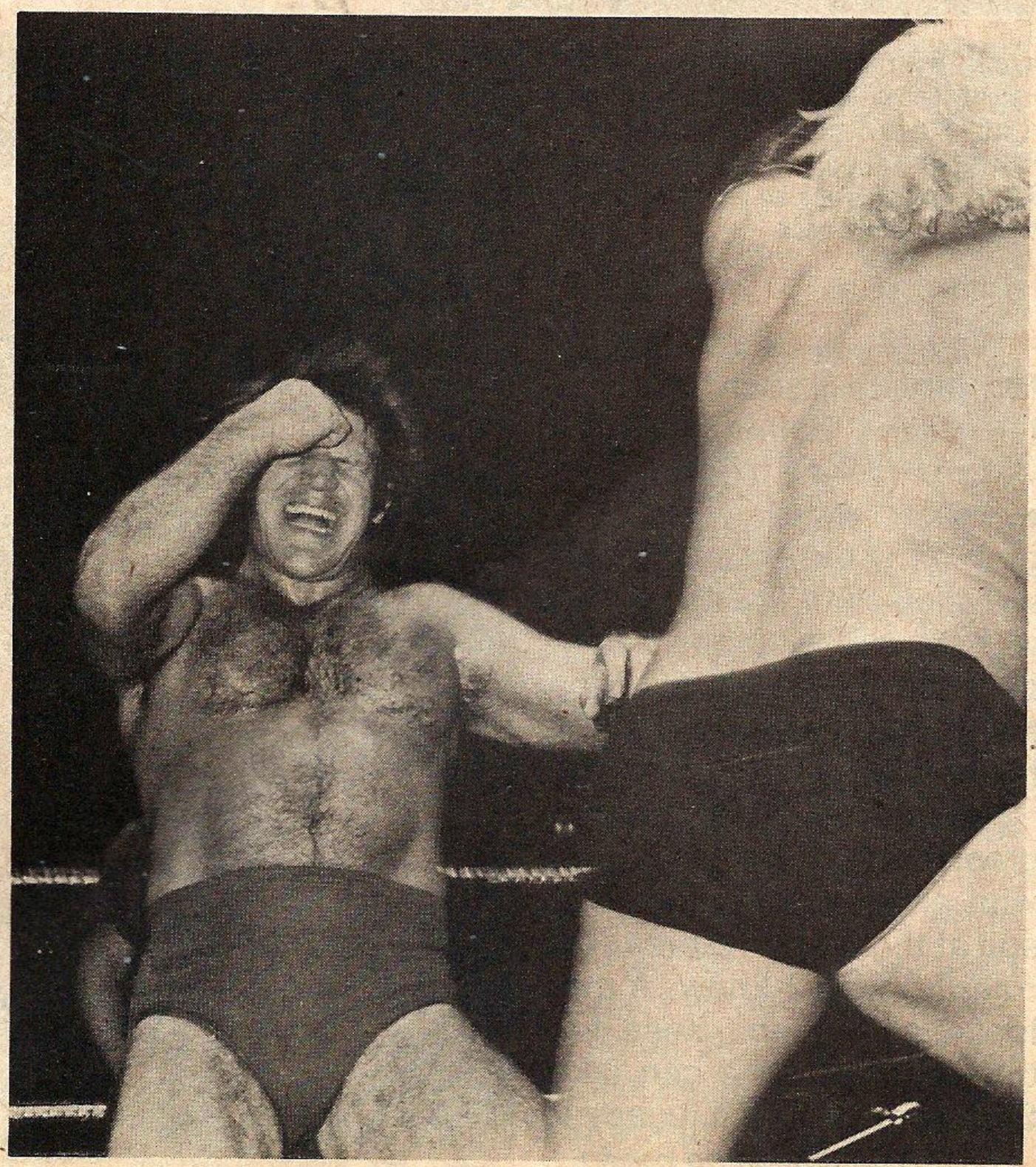
SAMMARTINO VS. STAN HANSEN

"My Career Is Almost Ended"





Above left: Bruno removes Hansen's loaded elbow pad and puts it to good use. Above right: Bruno dazes Hansen with a right. Right: Bruno falls back after his neck was broken by Hansen's Lariat.



How can you ever forget a man who broke your neck? He wanted to hurt me. I don't go for crippling an opponent. This is sports, not war. You are supposed to show your athletic abilities, not figure out ways to end a man's career.

But that's how creeps like Hansen operate. They don't have much talent, so they need to do *something* in the ring. Since they have no sense of morality, all they can think of is resorting to their animal instincts. That means someone's liable to get hurt.

That night in the Garden still gives me the shivers.

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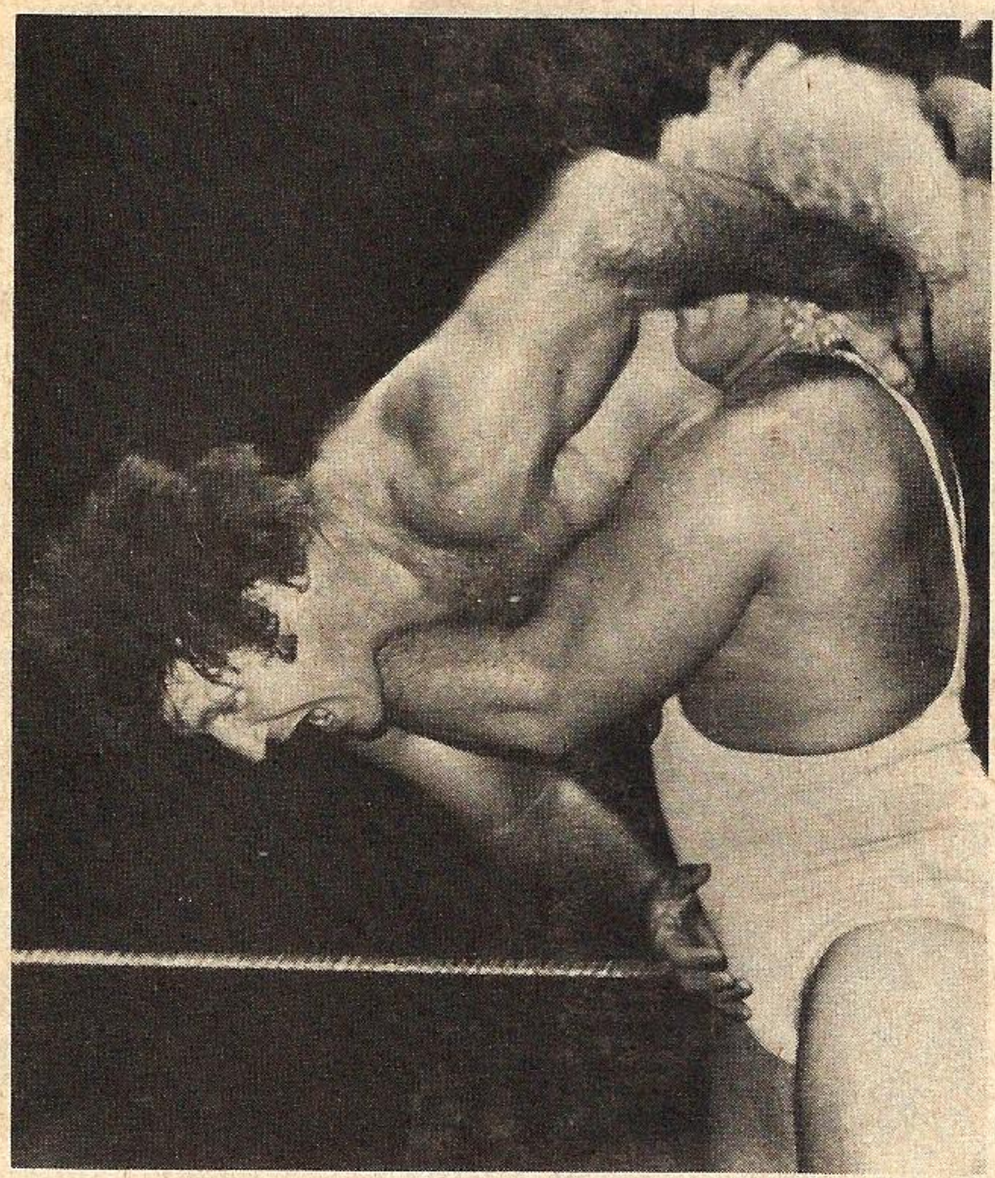
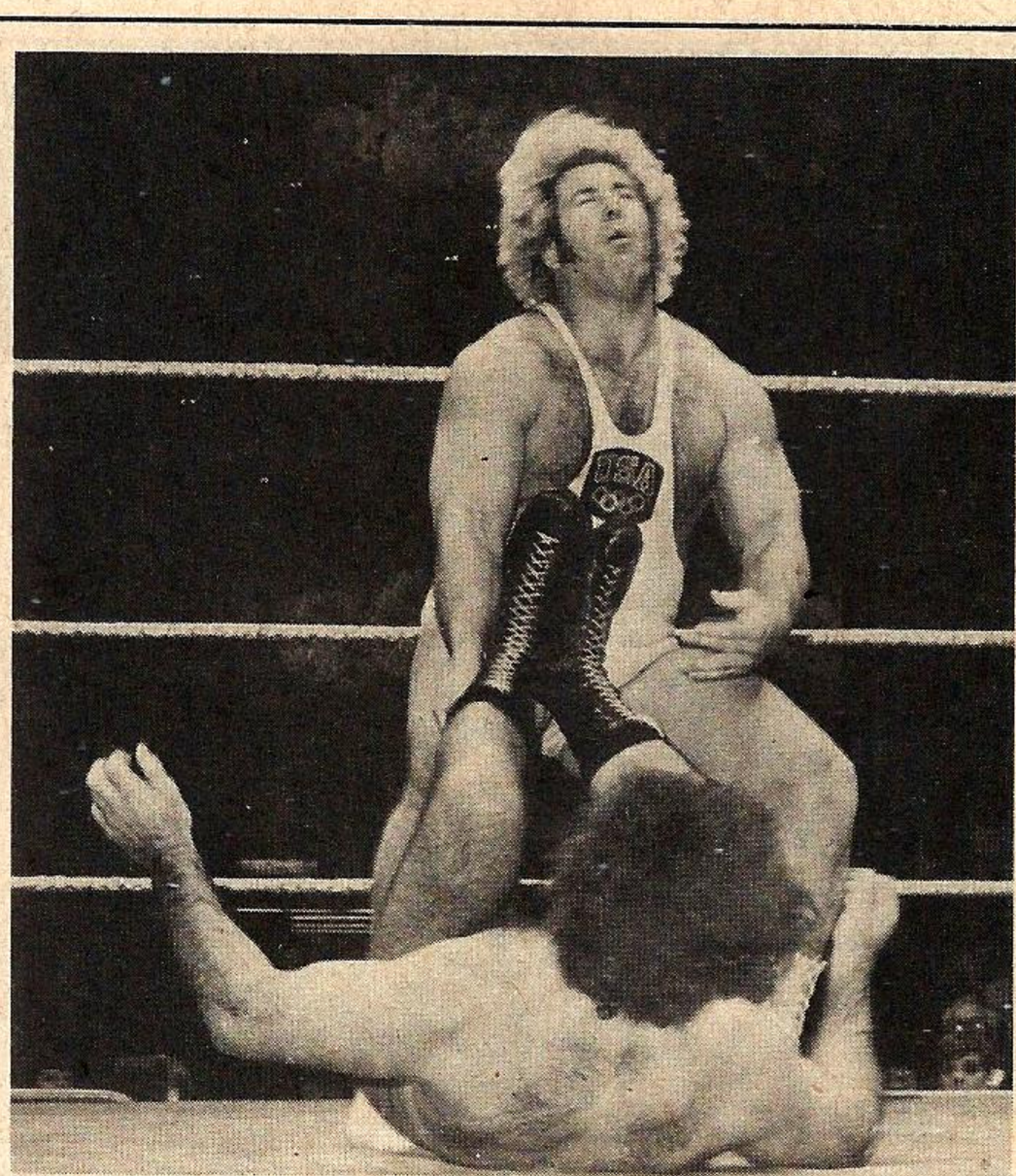
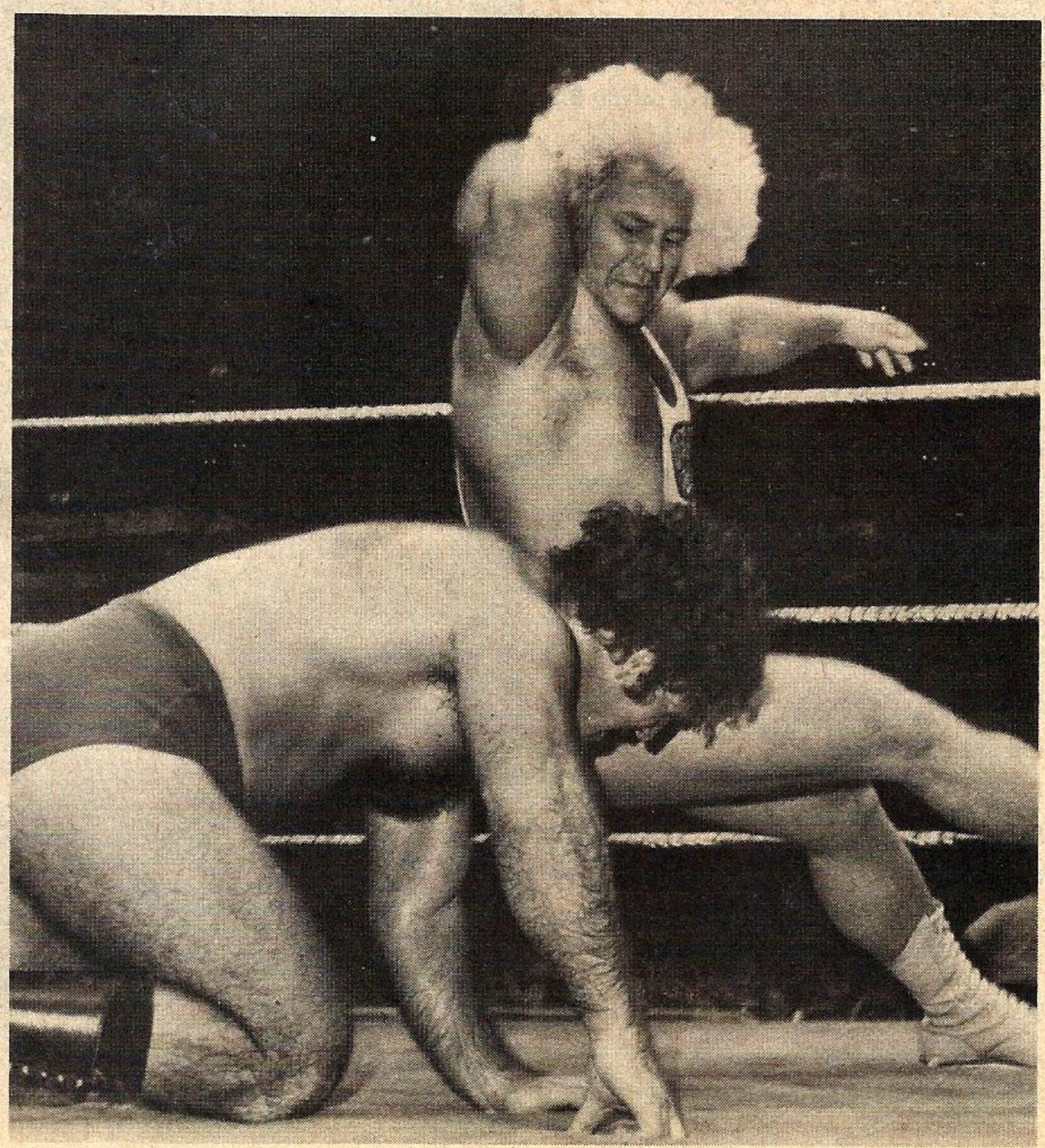
SAMMARTINO VS. KEN PATERA

"A Champion's Skill With A Criminal's Mind"





Above: With all his enormous strength, Patera bodyslams Sammartino. Above right: Bruno knocks the wind out of Patera with a kick to the solar plexus. Right: Patera drops an elbow across the back of Bruno's neck.



Well, it's a shame such a fine athlete is such a cheater. I consider Patera the most versatile and talented wrestler I've ever met. That guy can brawl or he can wrestle scientifically. He can withstand power moves or he can use his speed. Besides, he's got a good brain inside his twisted head.

Then why is he such a creep? What makes a guy with all that talent turn bad, spit at the fans, and break the rules? I wish I knew. A man looks at life and sees two different paths he can take. Some care about a legacy to

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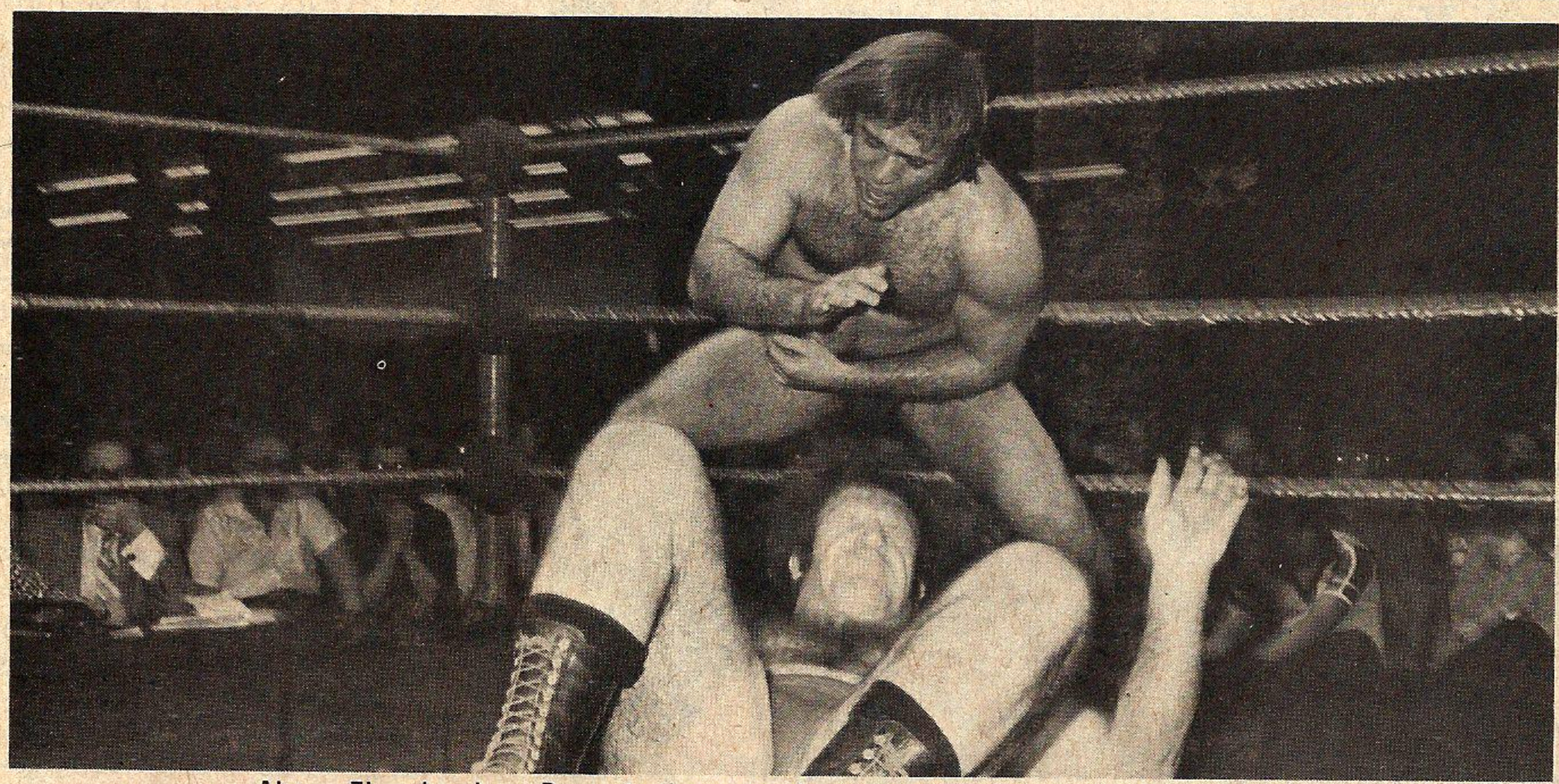
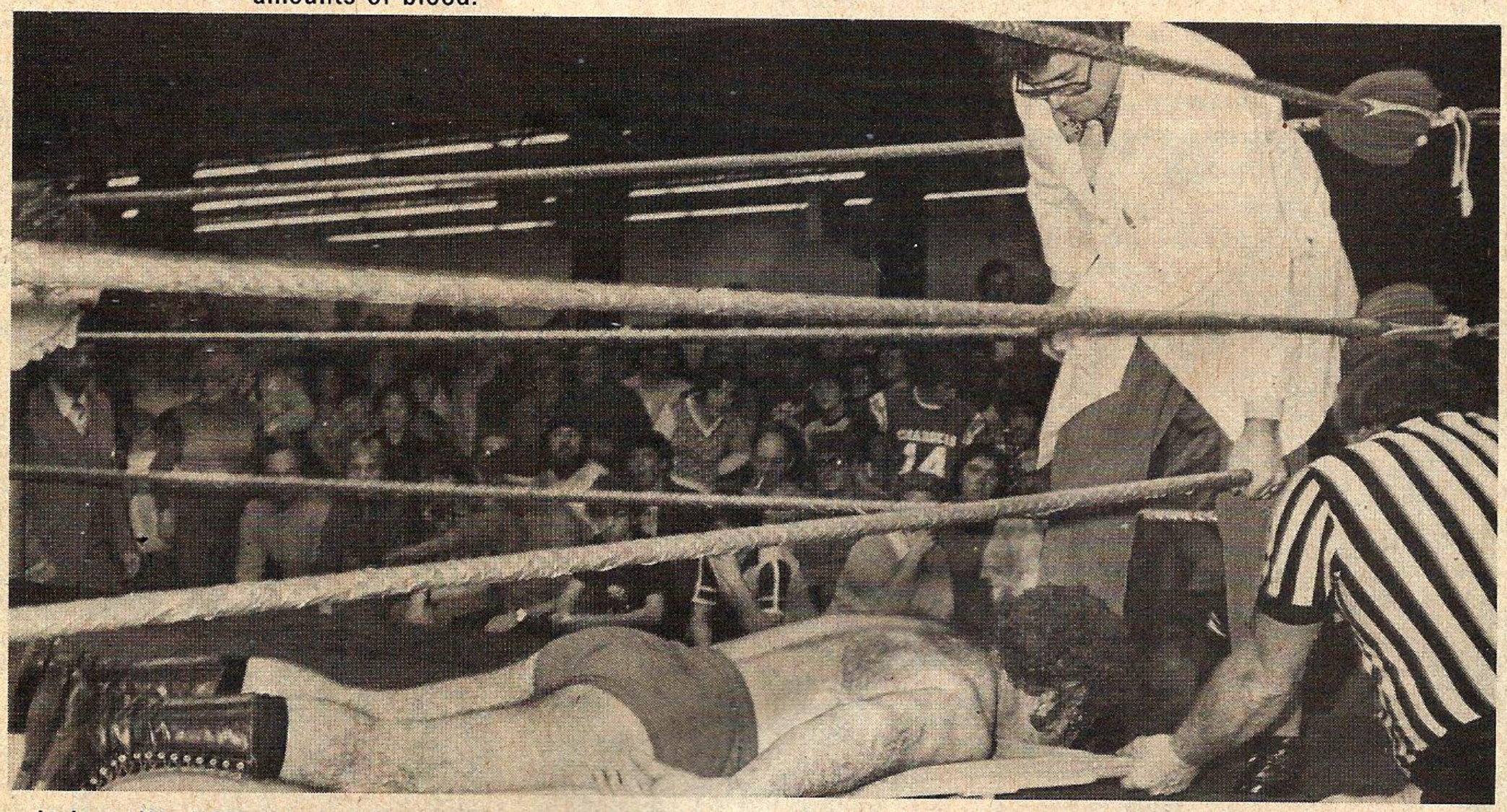
SAMMARTINO VS. LARRY ZBYSZKO

"I've Never Felt So Much Hatred For A Man"



Above: Zbyszko slams Bruno to the mat and prepares to pounce on his foe. Below: In what started as a scientific match ended with Bruno unconscious and losing large amounts of blood.



It is still difficult to discuss that Zbyszko without getting angry, losing my temper, and saying things I might not be very proud of. I cannot catalog my matches with Zbyszko. It isn't like he is just another rulebreaker. Or just another scientific wrestler gone berserk.

Zbyszko was once my friend. I thought of him like a brother. But I didn't understand all the hates under his skin, all the lava of resentments he had built up. You know, he's a young guy and he wants to own the world. You got to pay your dues. You got to wait your turn.

I never stopped Zbyszko. I always helped him. So what's bad about being associated

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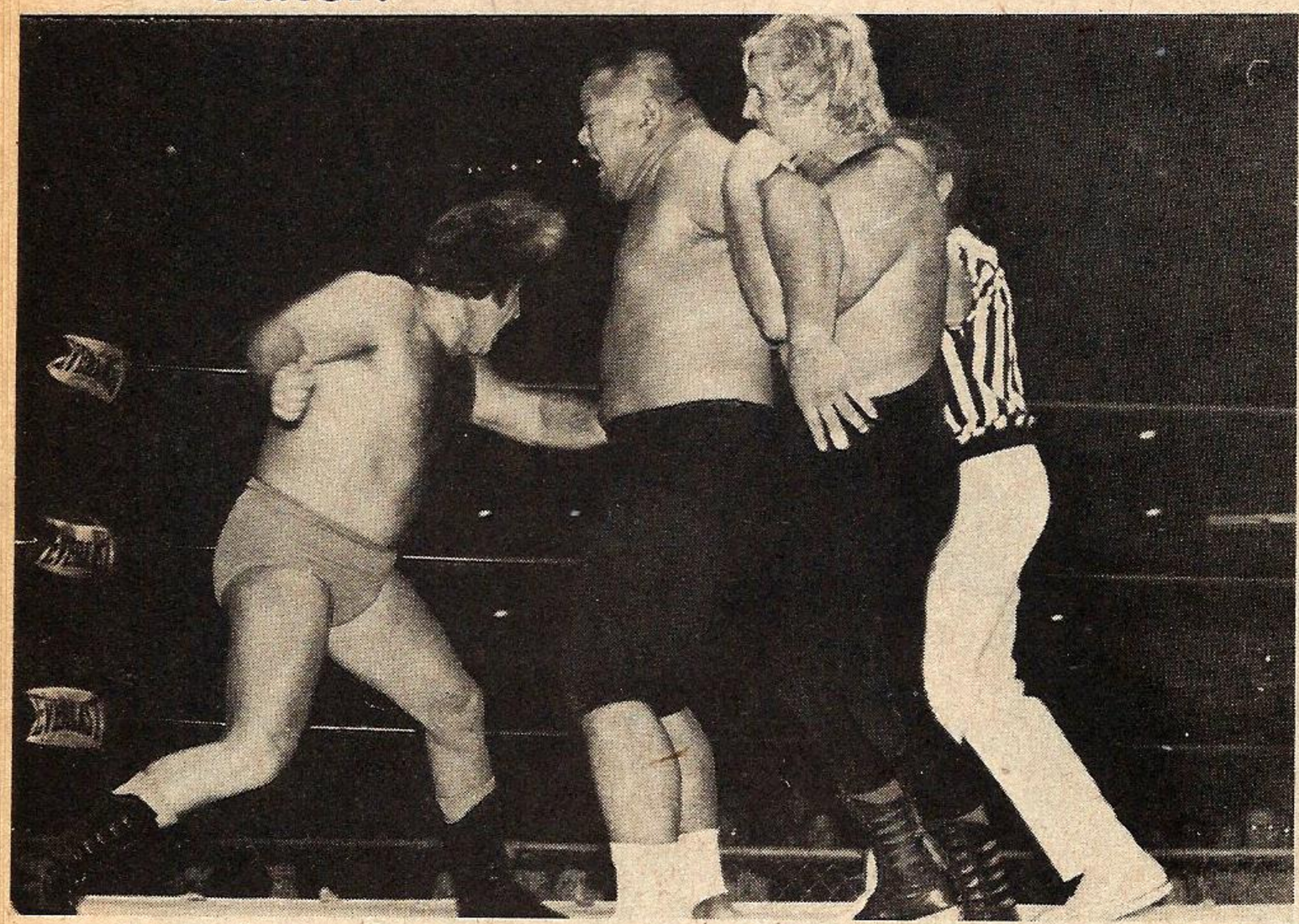
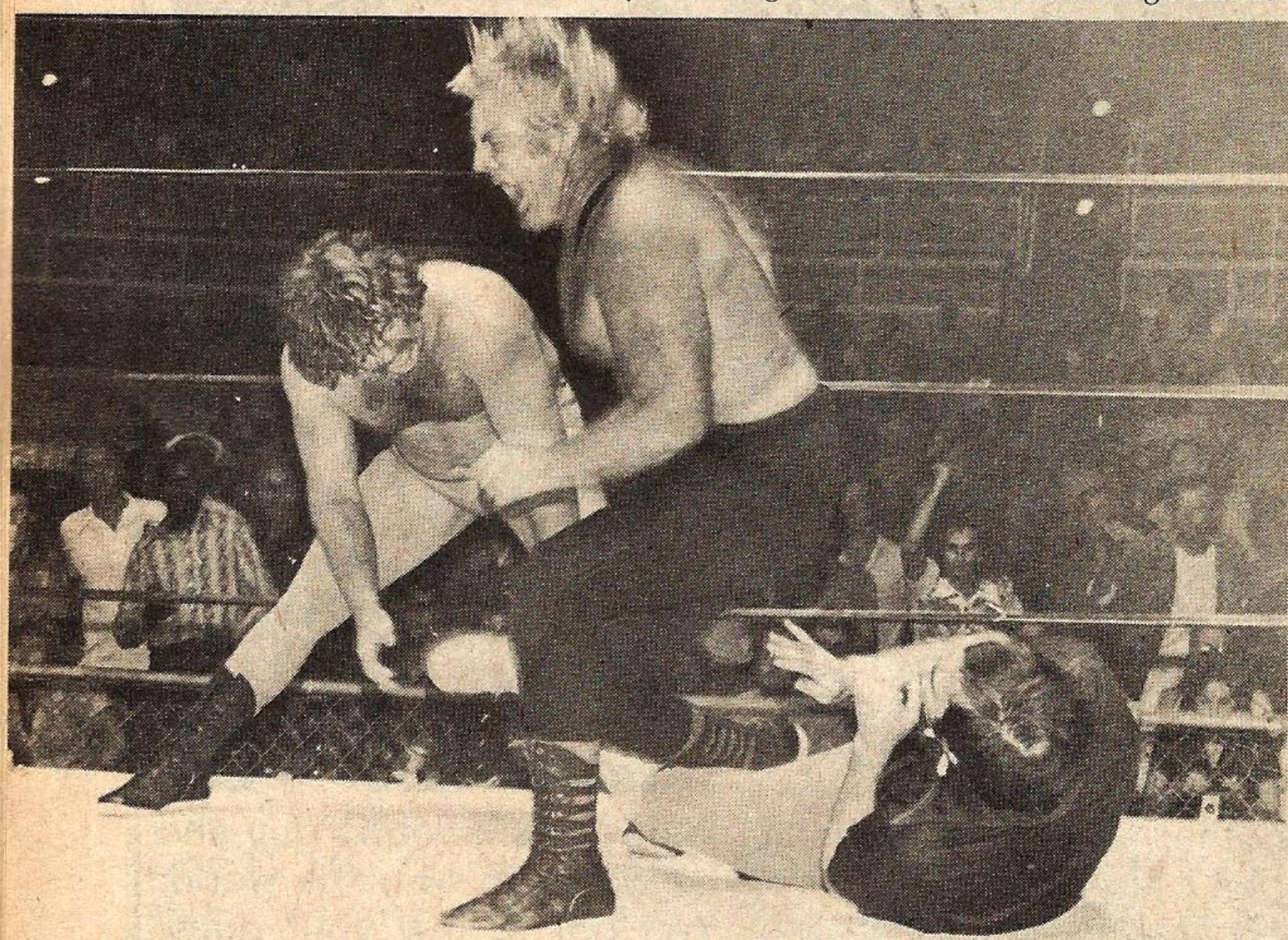
Pushed to the limit of their endurance, Eddie and Mike Graham lash out at Professor Toru Tanaka and Dick Slater!



Mike and Eddie Graham go to work on Playboy Gary Hart after the hapless manager tried to interfere in the Grahams' match against Dick Slater and Toru Tanaka (above). After Slater and Hart flee, the father and son team punish Tanaka, who had the misfortune of still being around. The Grahams were uncontrollable throughout this wild and savage battle!



LAUGHING RAUCOUSLY IN the interviewer's face, Playboy Gary Hart seemed the epitome of confidence. He appeared to be happily unafraid of what the future might bring.

"So the poor cowardly slobs have declared open season on Gary Hart," he shouted into the microphone, "admitting they cannot defeat the men of my army! It's a coward's tactic and totally in character with slobbering buffoons who call themselves the Grahams, the most pathetic father and son I've ever had the misfortune to encounter! That these two stiffs have the gall to even challenge Professor Tanaka and Dick Slater, two of the greatest ever, shows what little sense of reality they have.

"What cowardice, what an admission of their incompetence! Unable to pin Tanaka or Slater, they have to go after the team's manager! It's a desperation tactic which speaks very badly for the old man and sonny boy.

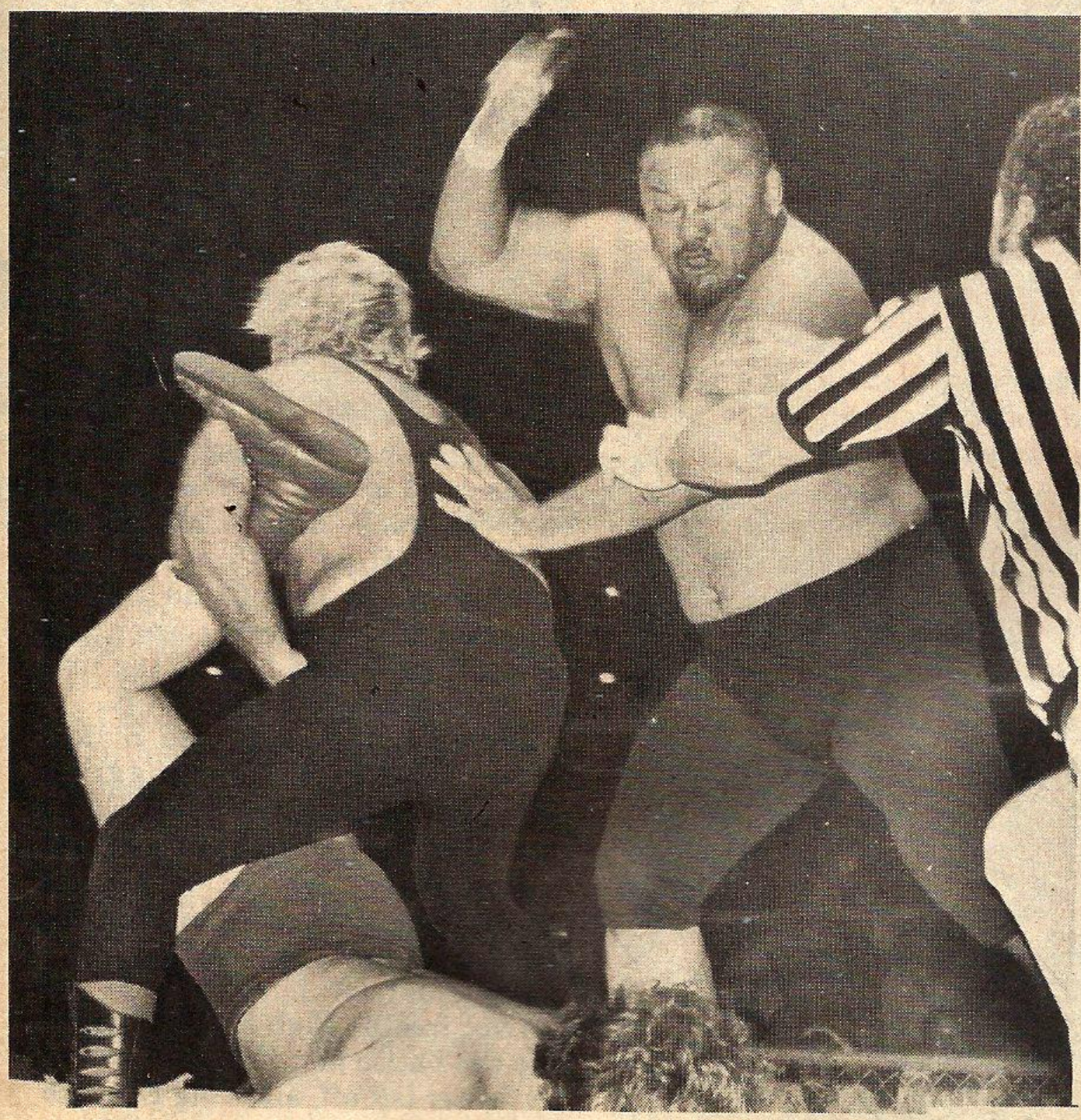
PHOTOS BY BILL APTER

THE NIGHT MIKE AND EDDIE GRAHAM EXPLODED!

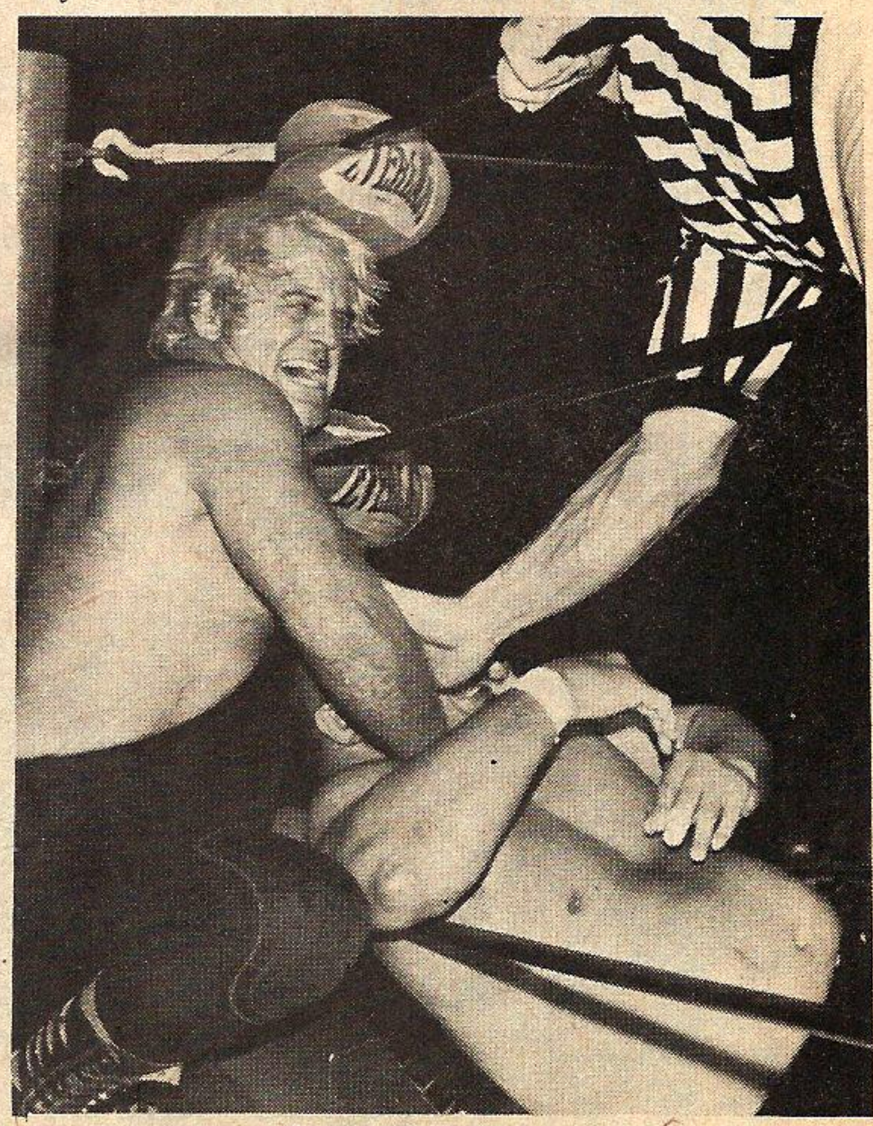
"But what few people know is that the commission okayed this foul situation. After asking *my* permission. I told these guys that under no conditions could the Graham family clods defeat my men. Any stipulation would be acceptable. Open season was declared on Playboy Gary Hart, the greatest manager wrestling has ever known, only after I said it could be done. With my army, I fear no man or men."

"But the Graham's weren't the only ones," the interviewer pointed out, "who requested this open season. In fact, the commission claimed no single request has ever been made before by so many different, respected wrestlers."

"All of whom are paid lackeys!" Hart declared. "I have in my possession photographic copies of canceled checks from the Grahams to every wrestler who made the request along with them. This is positive proof showing how corrupt my enemies are. The Grahams spent over $25,000 to get the chance to legally thrash me! Well, I can tell you right now it's a thrown away fortune!"



Above: Slater holds Mike Graham as Hart pummels the helpless wrestler. Left: Tanaka tries to free Slater from Eddie Graham's Boston crab by smashing Eddie with a judo chop. Below: Tanaka is caught in the corner by Graham, who wrenches Toru's neck!



"Can we see the checks?" the interviewer naturally asked.

"I'm bored," Hart said suddenly. "I'm leaving." He walked quickly from the studio.

When the Grahams heard Hart's accusation, both father and son broke out laughing. So did every other person who had petitioned the commission to declare open season on Hart.

For a week afterward, wrestlers would call up jokingly to ask the Grahams when the payments were due. Once he saw the reaction, Hart never repeated the accusation again.

On the night of the match, Mike and Eddie Graham were quiet and reflective. They had trained hard and well. Their strategies had become almost instinct to them. They were ready.

Father and son had decided weeks ago to wait for Hart to interfere in the match. They would then force Hart to submit, demonstrating beyond doubt how openly he meddles in a match.

With open season, Hart would be responsible for his team losing, as Gary would be considered another wrestler. Ideally, the match would end with Hart pinned to the canvas.

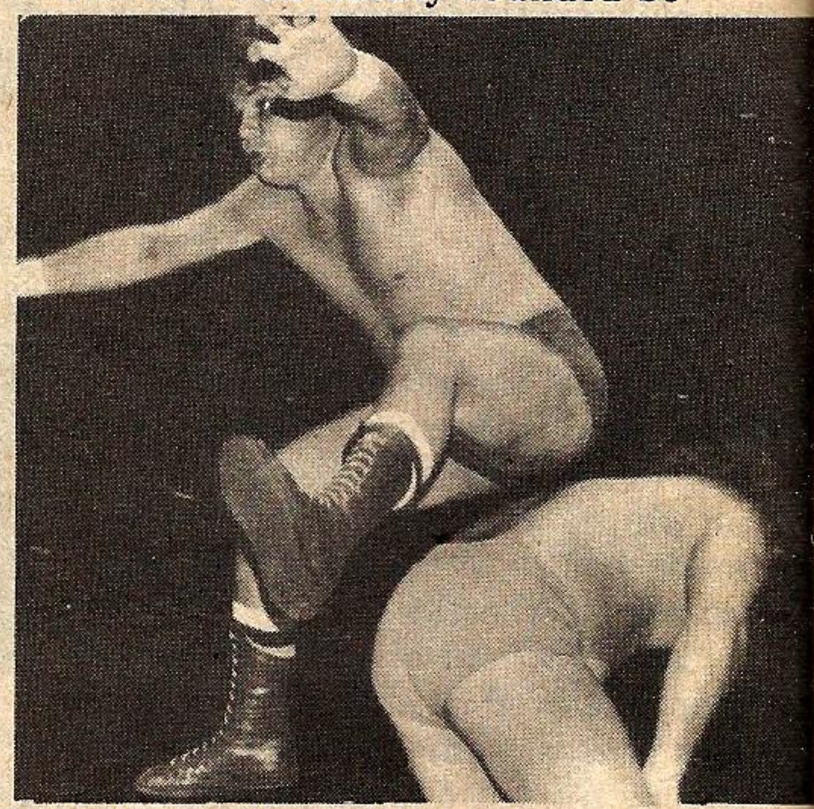
In the other dressing room, Tanaka and Slater listened carefully to Hart's instructions. No one could overhear what was said. Others in the dressing room only saw the three men huddled together, talking feverishly.

When the three finally entered the arena, the Grahams were standing in the opposite corner, waiting. Tanaka and Slater climbed over the ropes while Hart took his customary position at the ring apron. The crowd sat in restless quiet, anxious for this much heralded battle to begin.

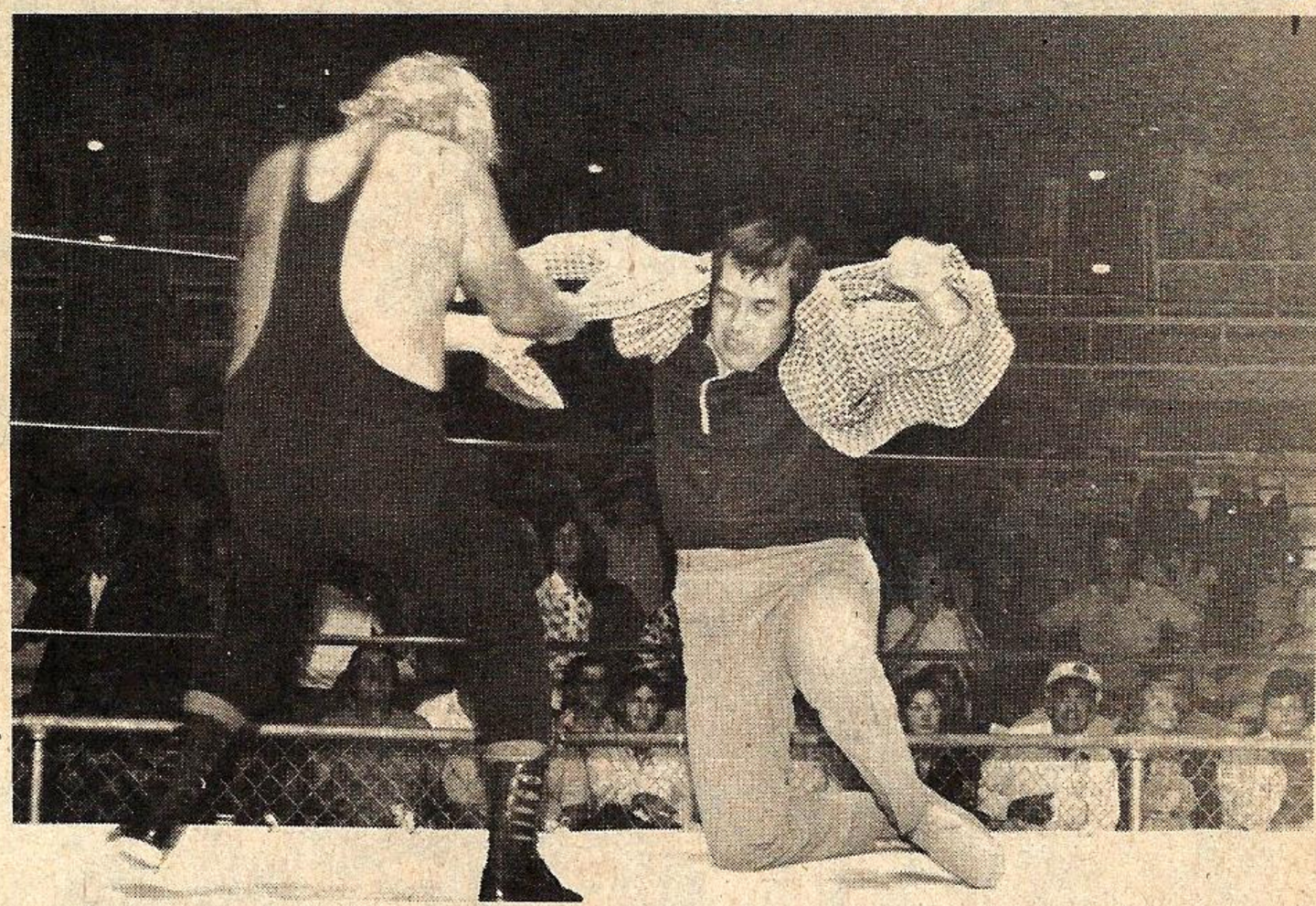
The bell had hardly sounded before Mike Graham and Dick Slater were locked in combat. The two men battered each other, exchanging locks and flips with terrifying rapidity. When Mike found himself slammed into his own corner, his father commanded him to tag and let the veteran have a go at it.

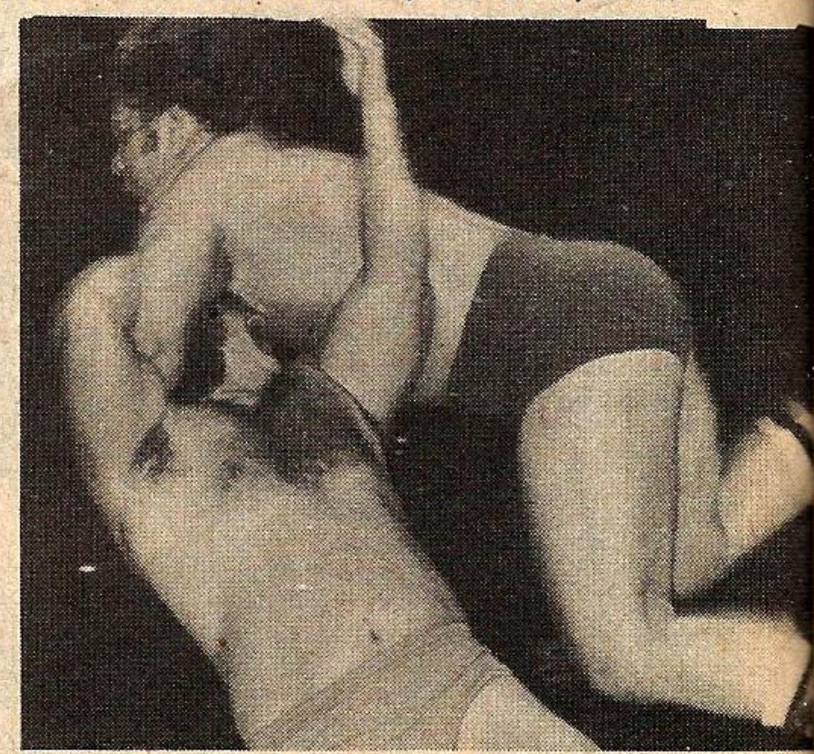
Eddie, raging, tore into Slater. Preventing Dick from tagging, Eddie forced the action until Slater was hopelessly trapped in a brutal Boston crab. Slater's screams of agony were stopped when Tanaka felled Eddie with a judo chop.

The elder Graham sank to the canvas, freeing Slater. Mike leaped into the battle and took over where his father left off, allowing Eddie to struggle back to his corner. Now it

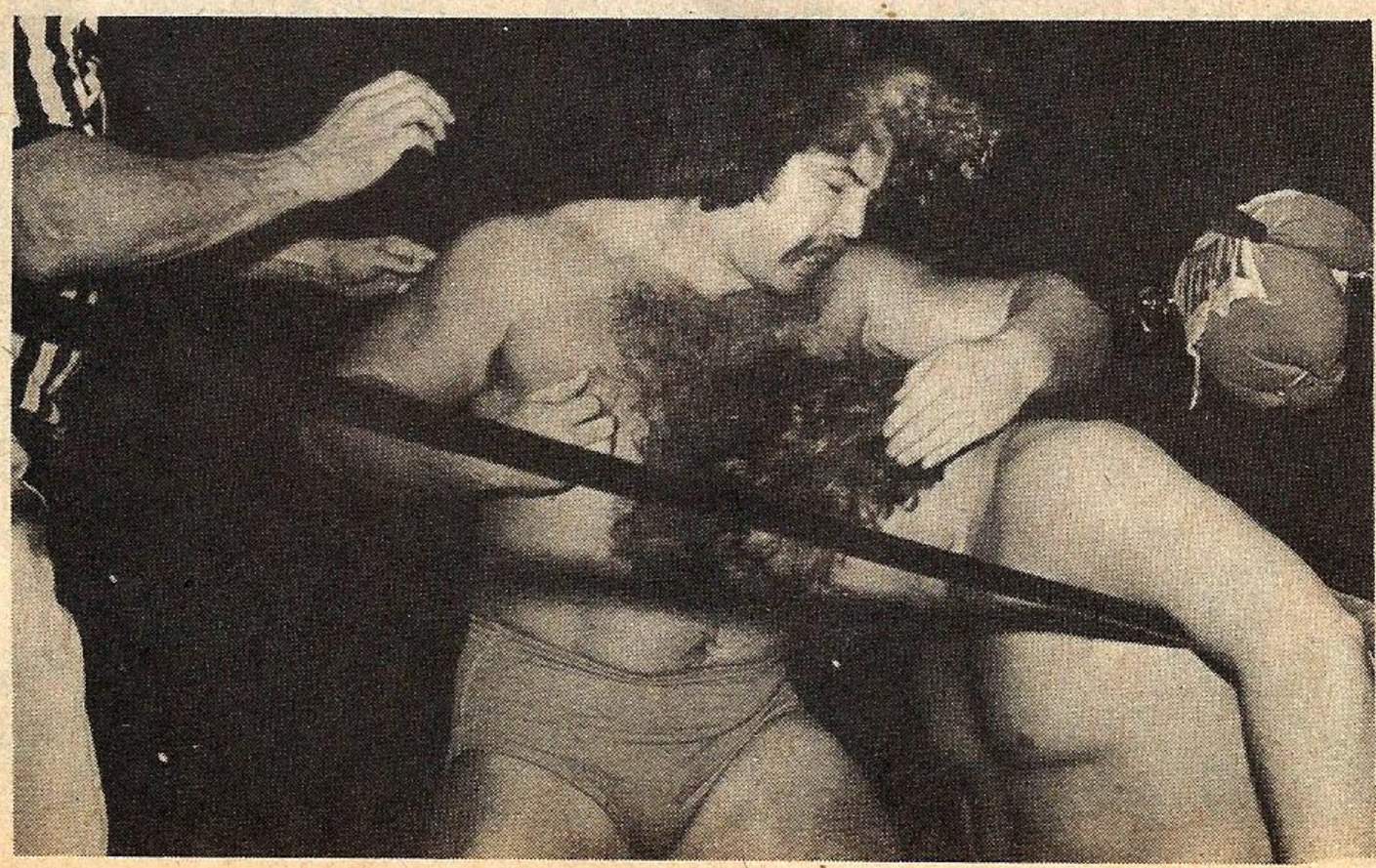


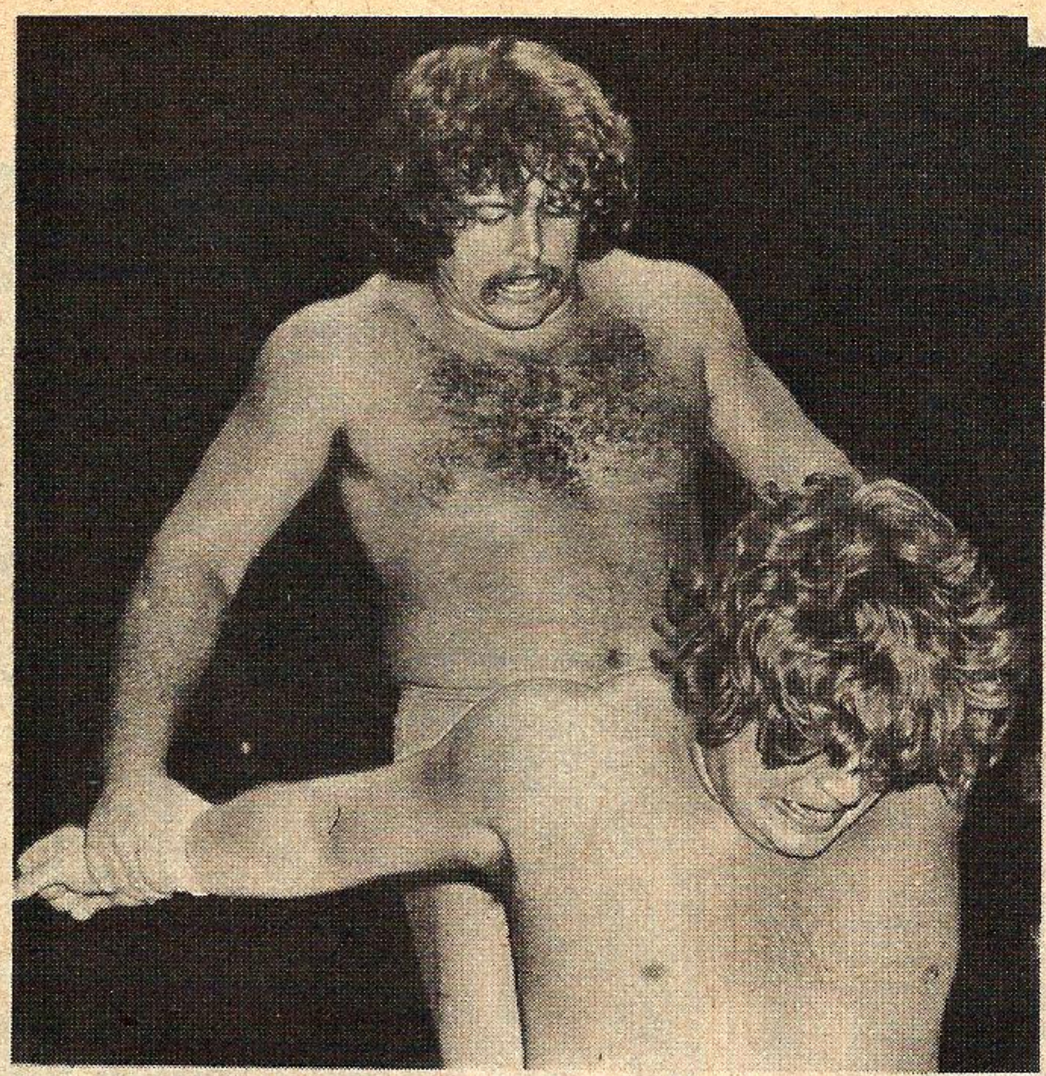
Dick Slater fails to flatten Mike with a flying body press (above) but comes right back with another attempt which is successful (below). Mike crashes to the canvas from the force!

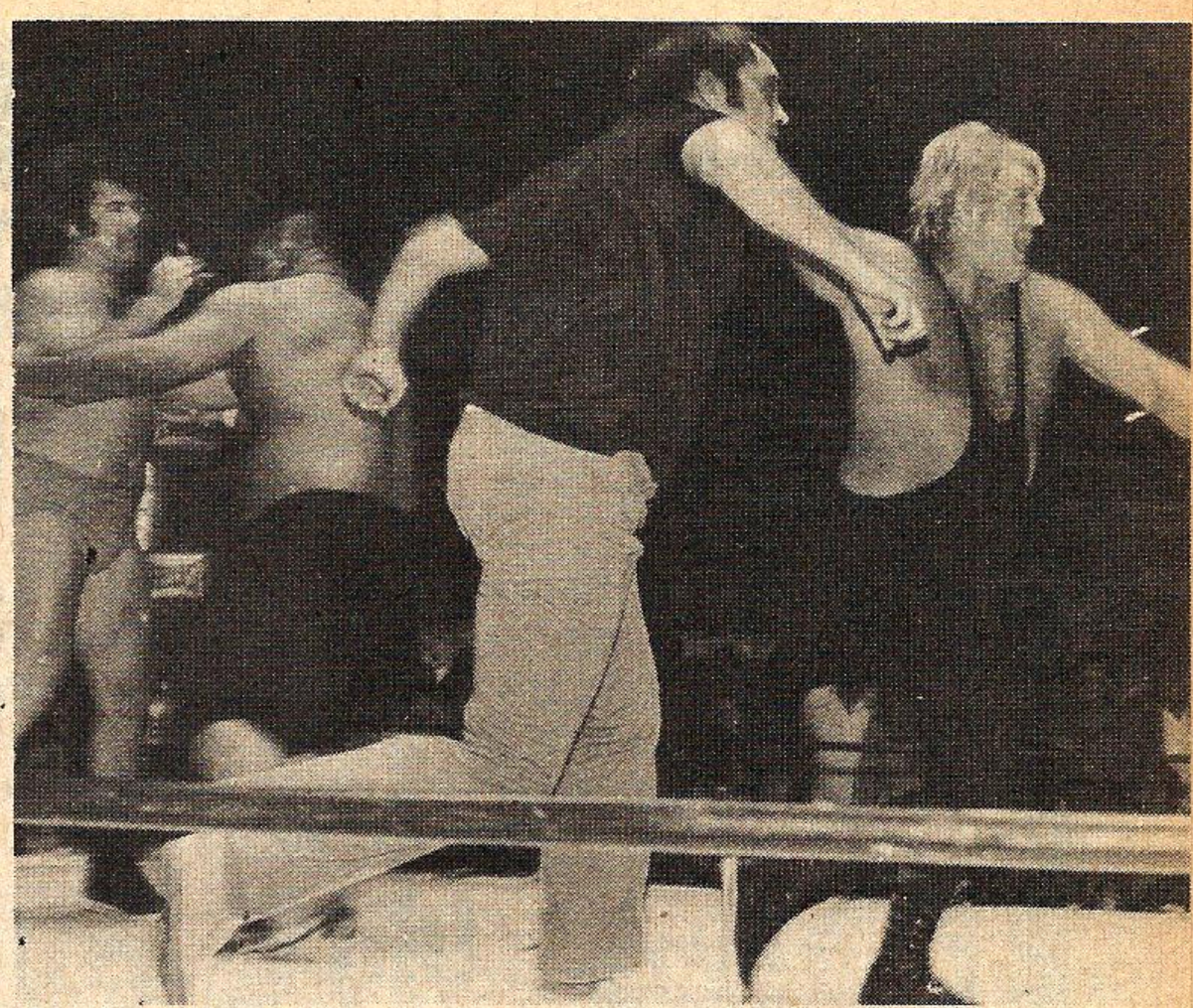




Eddie grabs Hart's coat and twists the manager down (above). It's open season on Gary and Graham intends to take full advantage. Mike is more interested in battering Dick Slater on the turnbuckle (below).

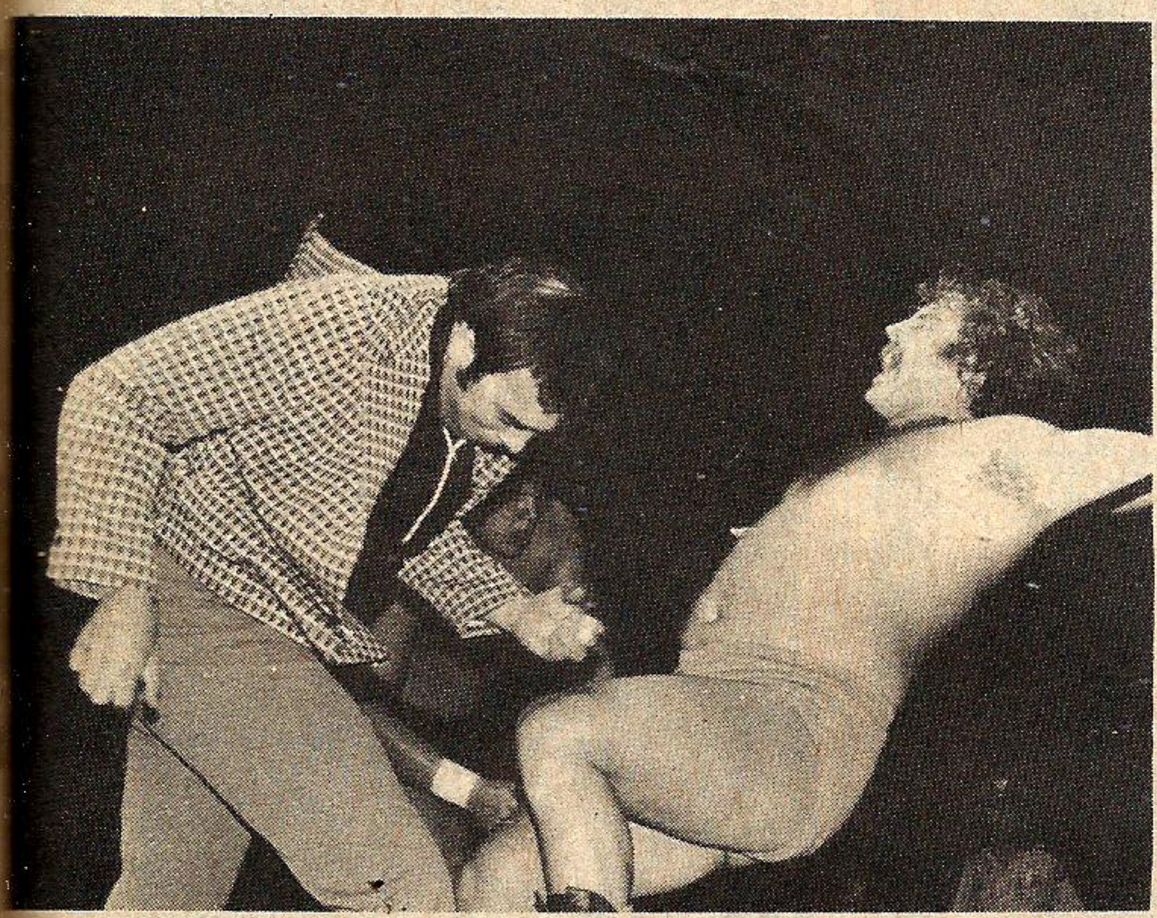


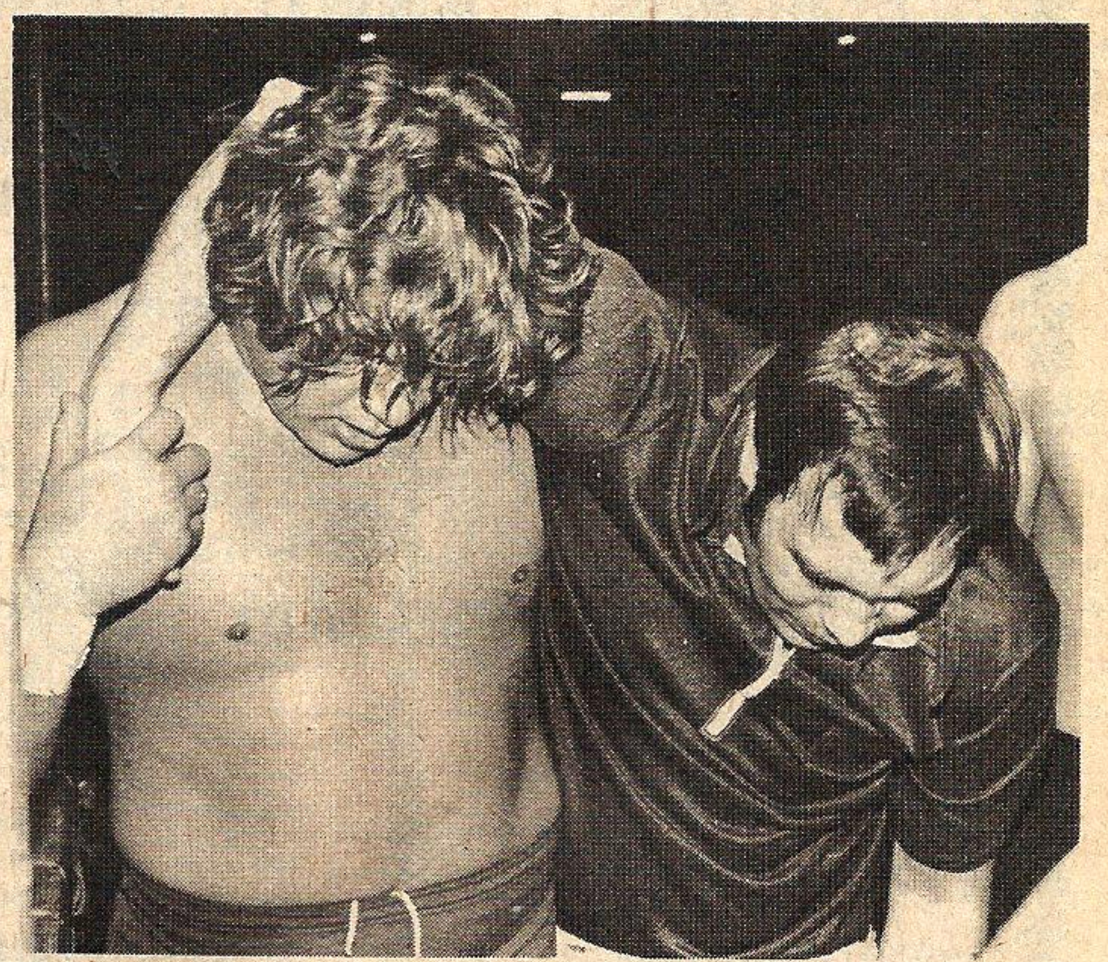




Mike Graham has Dick Slater in paralyzing agony in the crucifix hold (above), causing Hart to leap into the ring. After freeing Slater, Hart pushes Mike to the ropes and begins to pound away at the younger Graham's mid-section (below). Open season on Hart had begun!

Above: Eddie Graham collars Hart and drags the despised manager across the ring. Hart is helpless to stop the Graham rampage. Below: Dick Slater helps his beaten and bruised manager back to the dressing room, leaving Toru alone against the still outraged and raging Graham team.





was Mike's turn to rage.

When Eddie regained his strength, he discovered a present waiting for him in the corner. Mike had slammed Tanaka against the turnbuckle. Eddie grabbed the Japanese star from behind. He taught him why it's not a good idea to anger a Graham.

Hart saw his two wrestlers being beaten and leaped into the ring. Fists flying, the unscrupulous manager attacked Mike Graham. Slater leaped to Tanaka's aid. The free-for-all was on.

The referee scurried from battle to battle, but didn't have a chance of maintaining order. The combatants kept changing with dizzying speed, everyone smashing the closest person. The look on Hart's face betrayed his shock at being in a battle instead of a massacre.

Slowly but surely, the Grahams managed to better the trio despite the odds. It was as if something inside had exploded in them. They could not be bested.

First the pair savaged Hart. Forgotten were plans to force the manager's submission. Eddie, with a shout of victory, lifted Hart high over his head and hurled the hapless "playboy" to the hard cement below. Mike soon forced Slater to join his manager. This left only Tanaka and the Grahams.

The professor attempted to flee. Eddie was too quick for him. He caught the Japanese grappler and held him while Mike punished Tanaka mercilessly. Eventually, the referee forced the Grahams to release their prisoner and let him join his fellows in flight.

As the crowd cheered wildly, the conquering Grahams stood proudly, watching their opponents limp back to the dressing room. They had taught Gary Hart that open season would be a long, hard time. □

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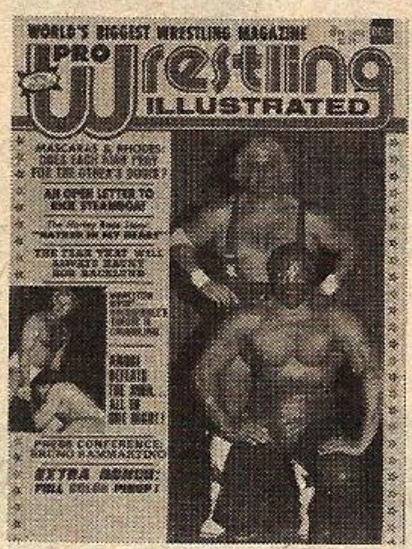

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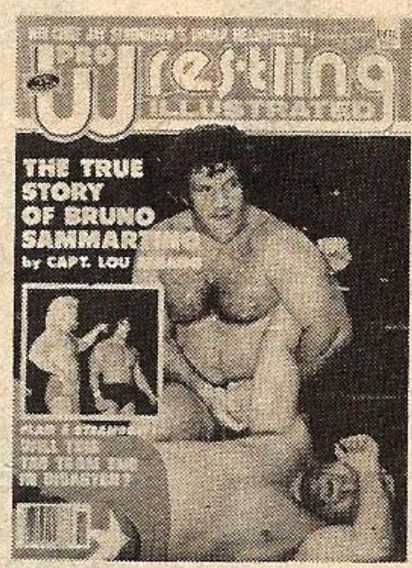

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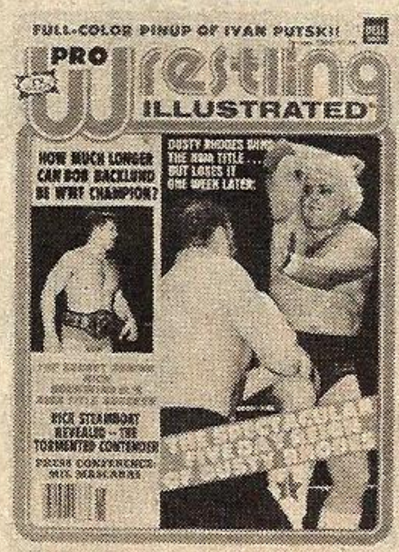

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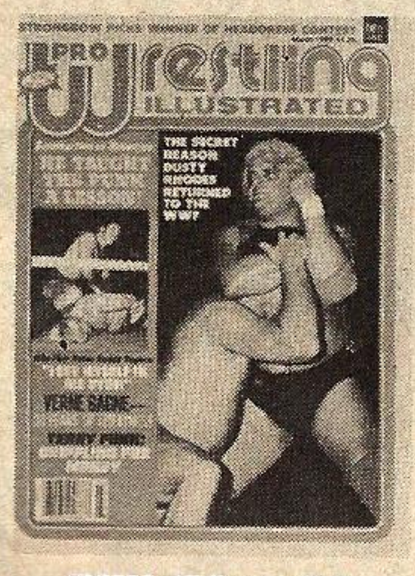

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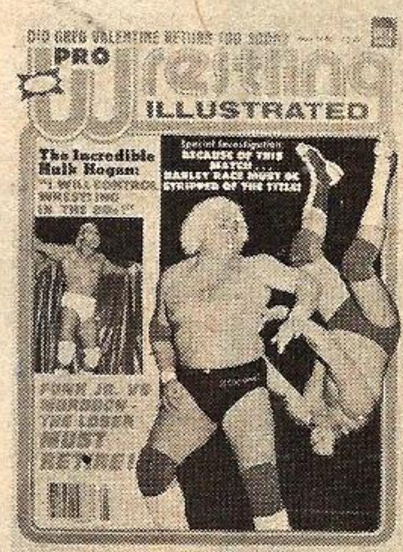

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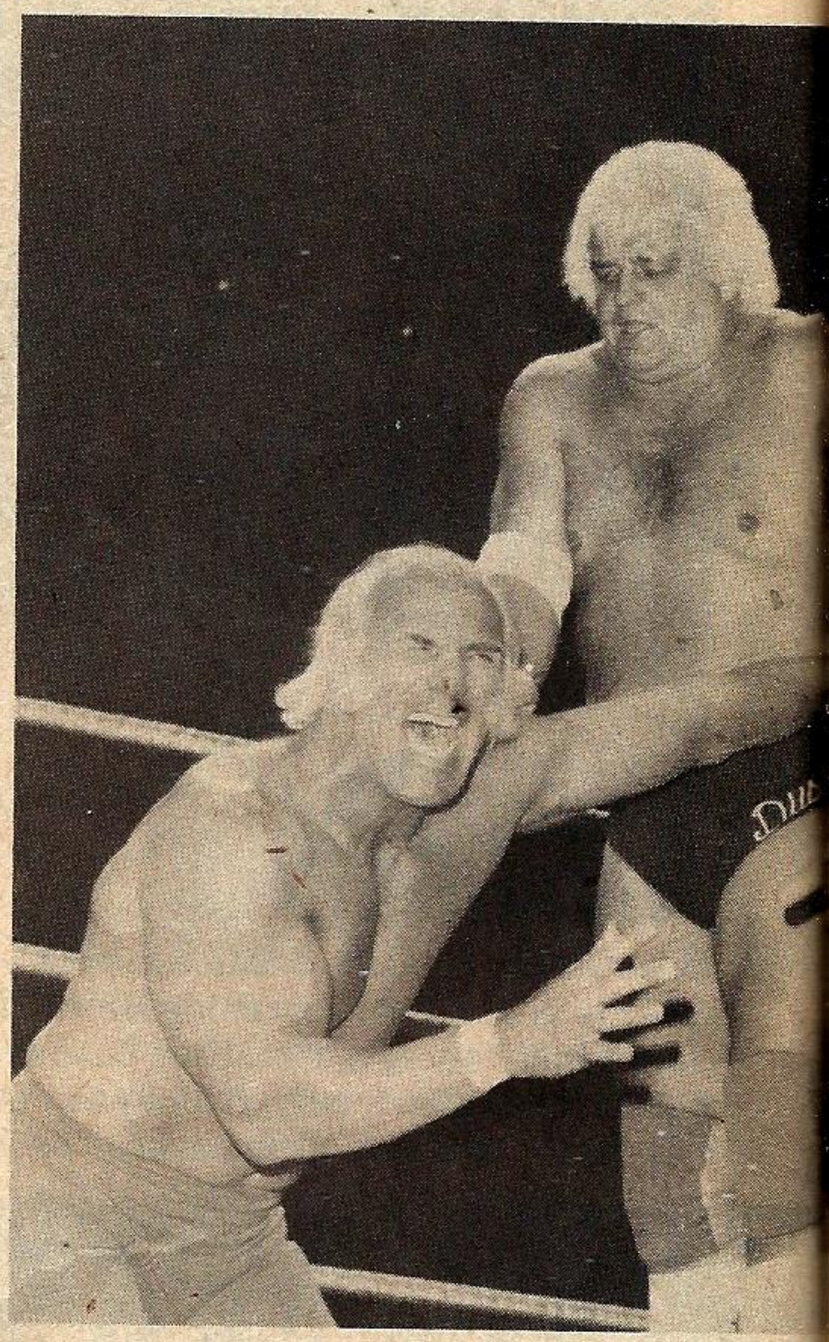
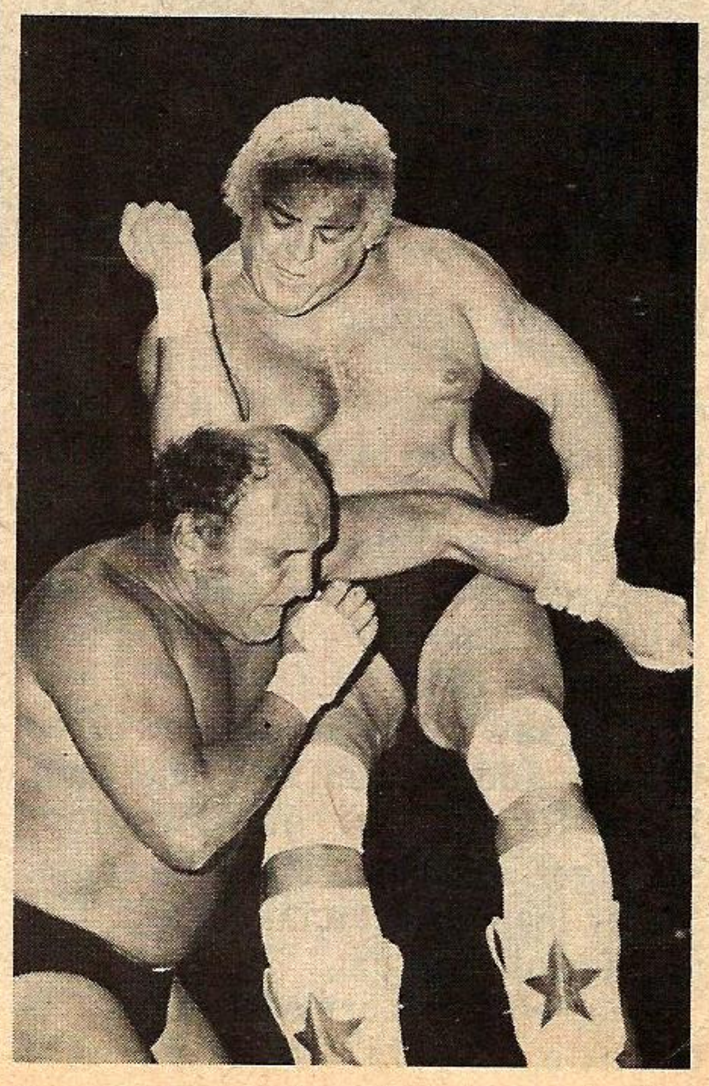
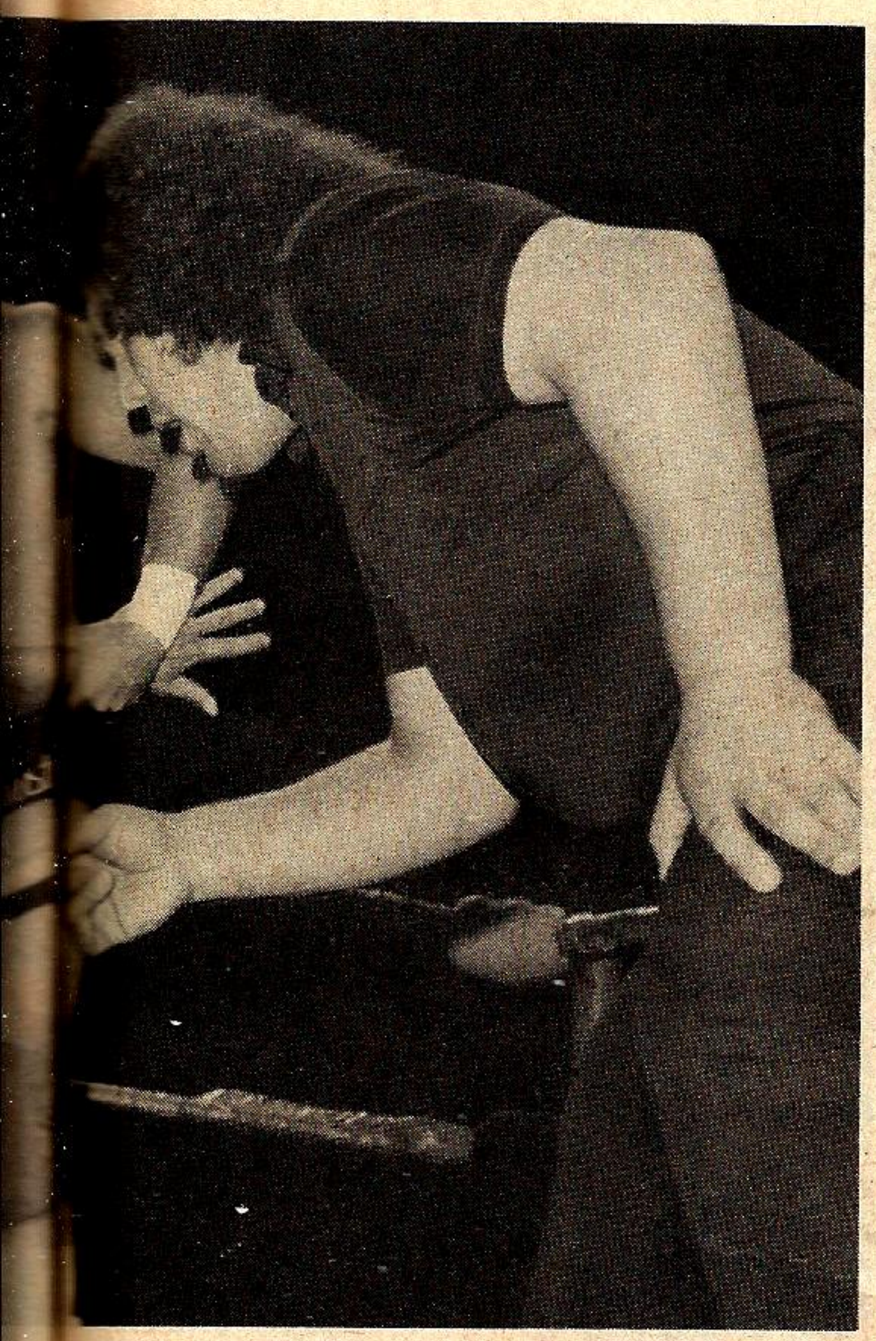
DUSTY RHODES

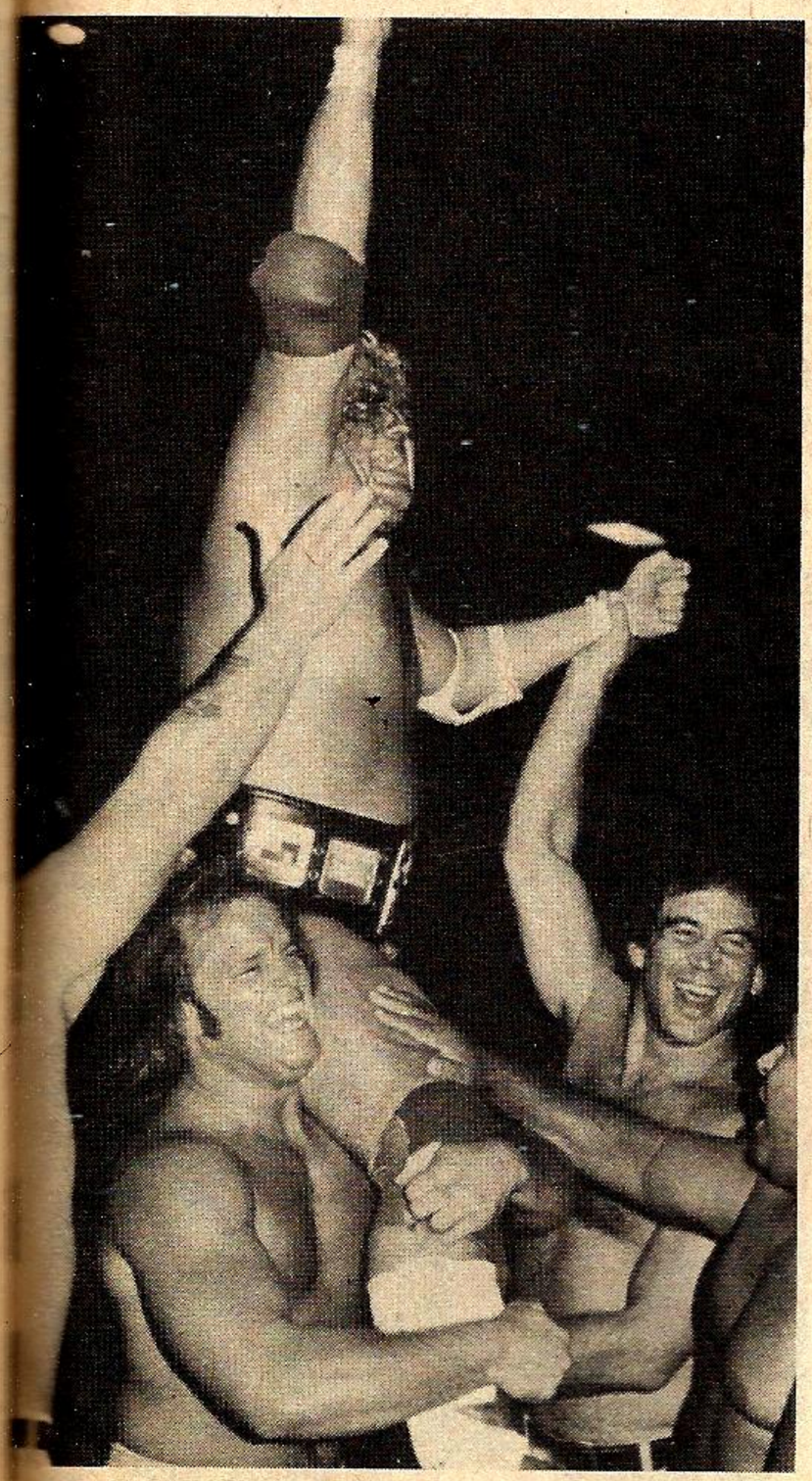
(Continued from Page 26)



Above: Dusty works over Superstar Graham as special referee Andre the Giant presides. Right: Dusty and friends celebrate his winning of the NWA title from Harley Race in Tampa, Florida. Below: Dusty drops his atomic elbow smash on the back of Killer Karl Kox's neck.







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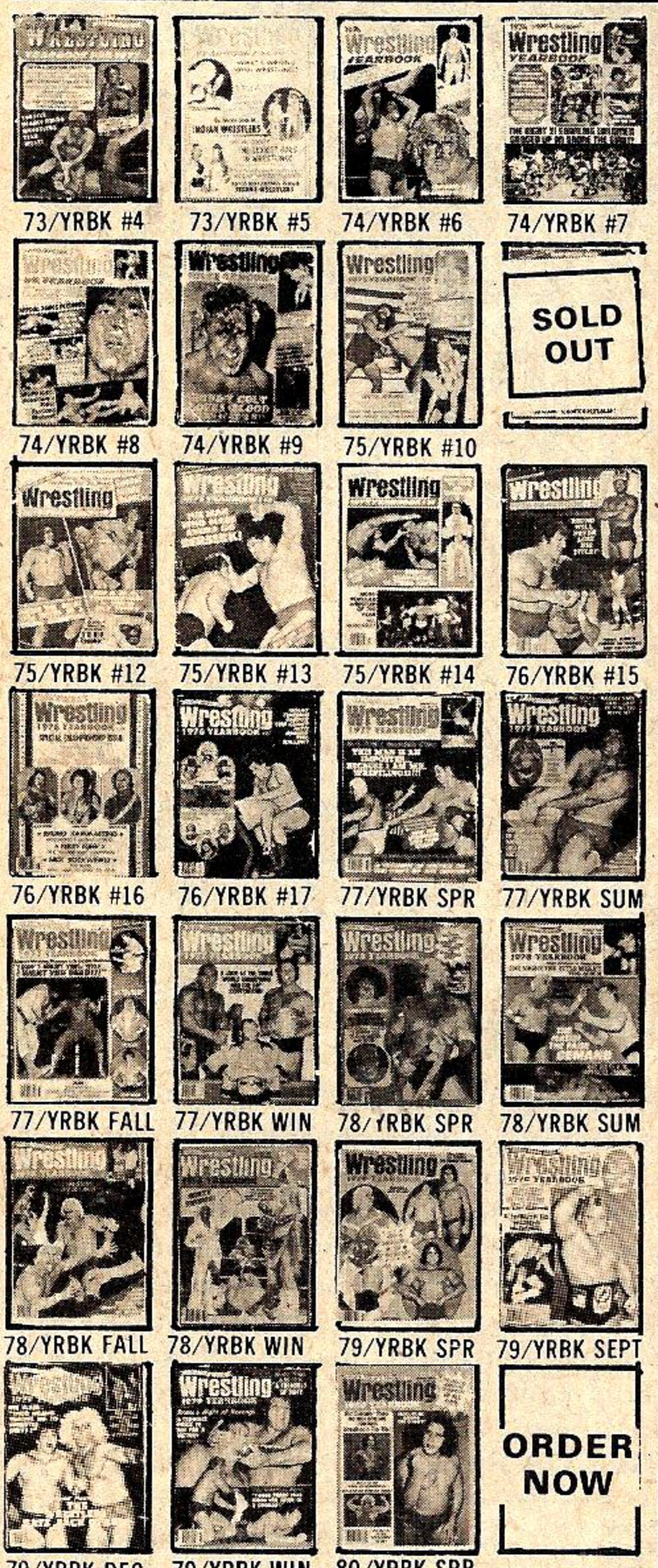

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DUSTY RHODES

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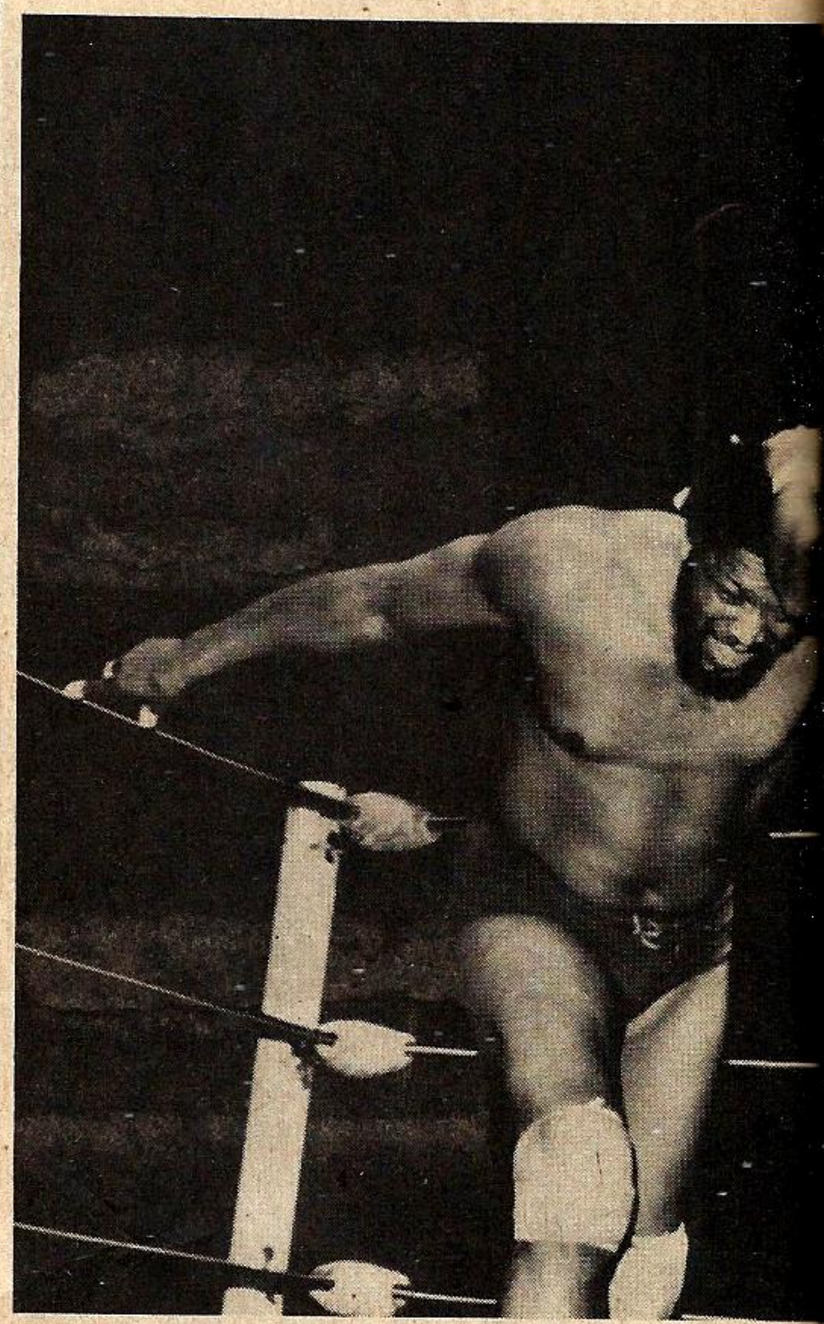
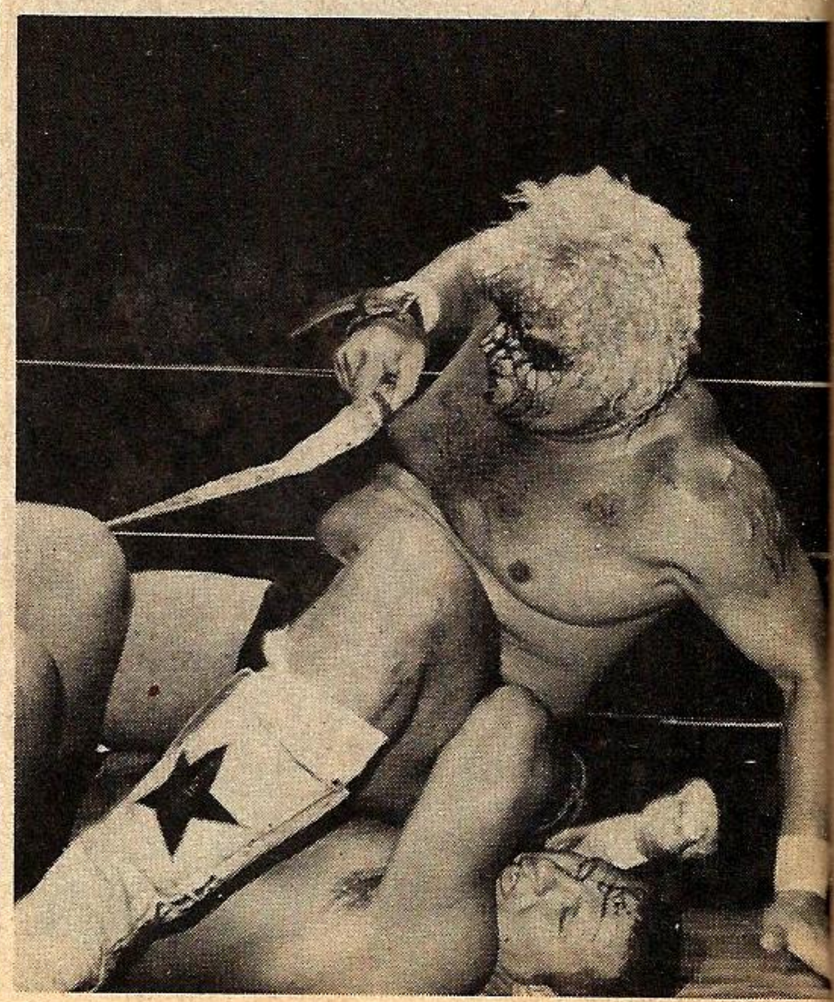
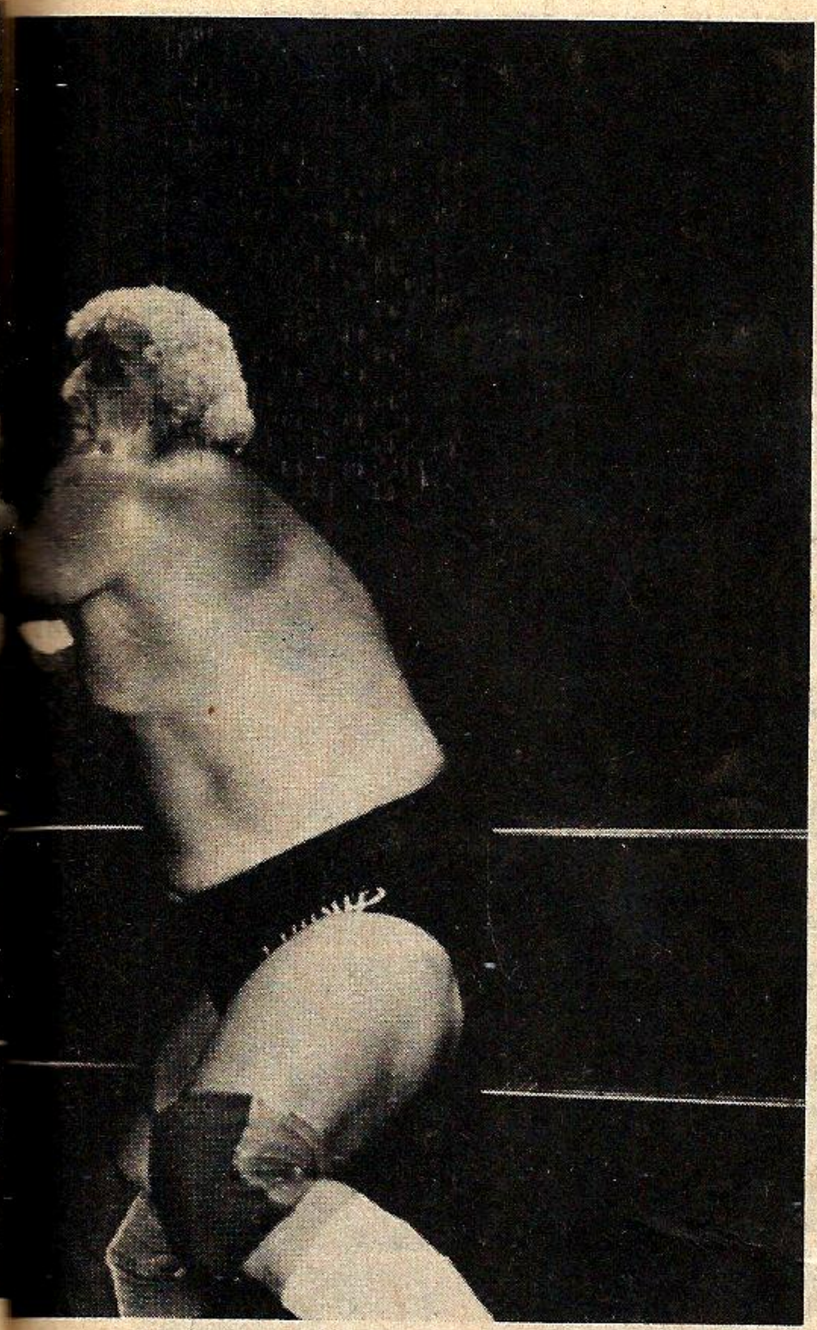


Above: Dusty grabs Ladd by the hair and throws him across the ring to the opposite turnbuckle. Right: Rhodes and Mil Mascaras team together on occasion. Their contrast in styles make them a very formidable team. Below: The blood flowed freely when Dusty met Waldo Von Erich in a Texas Bullrope Match.





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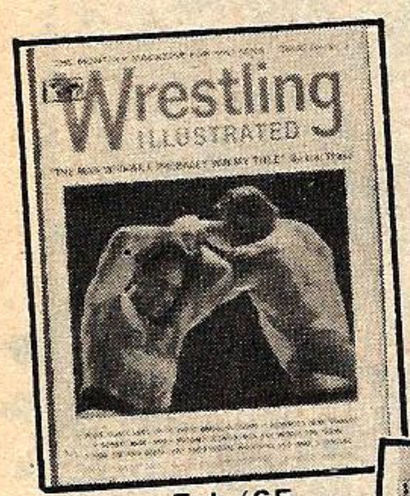
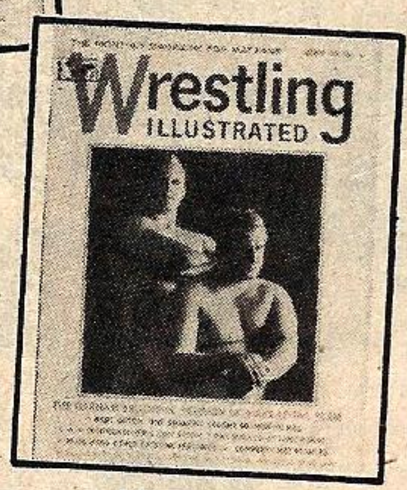


Feb/65
PEPPER GOMEZ



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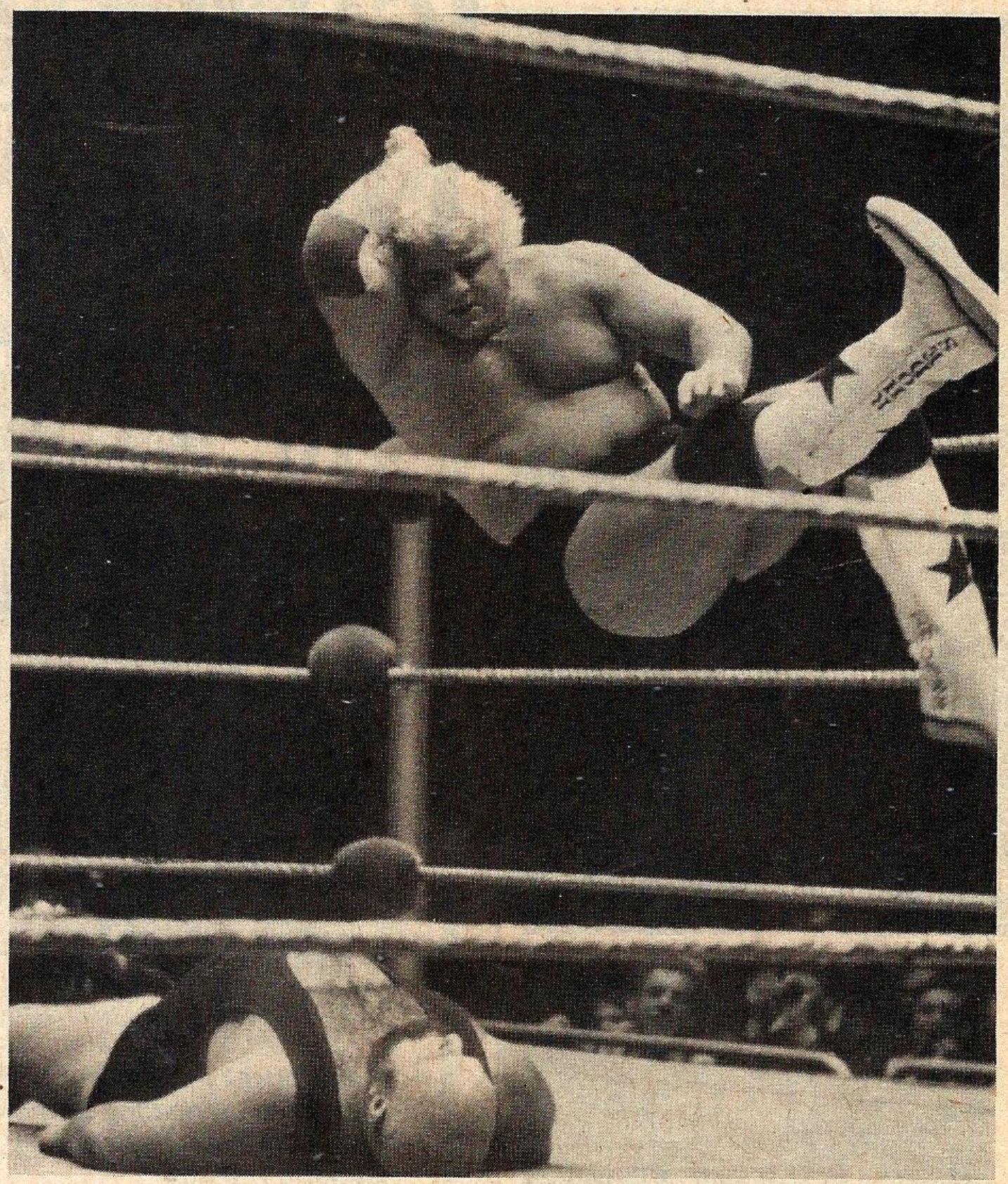
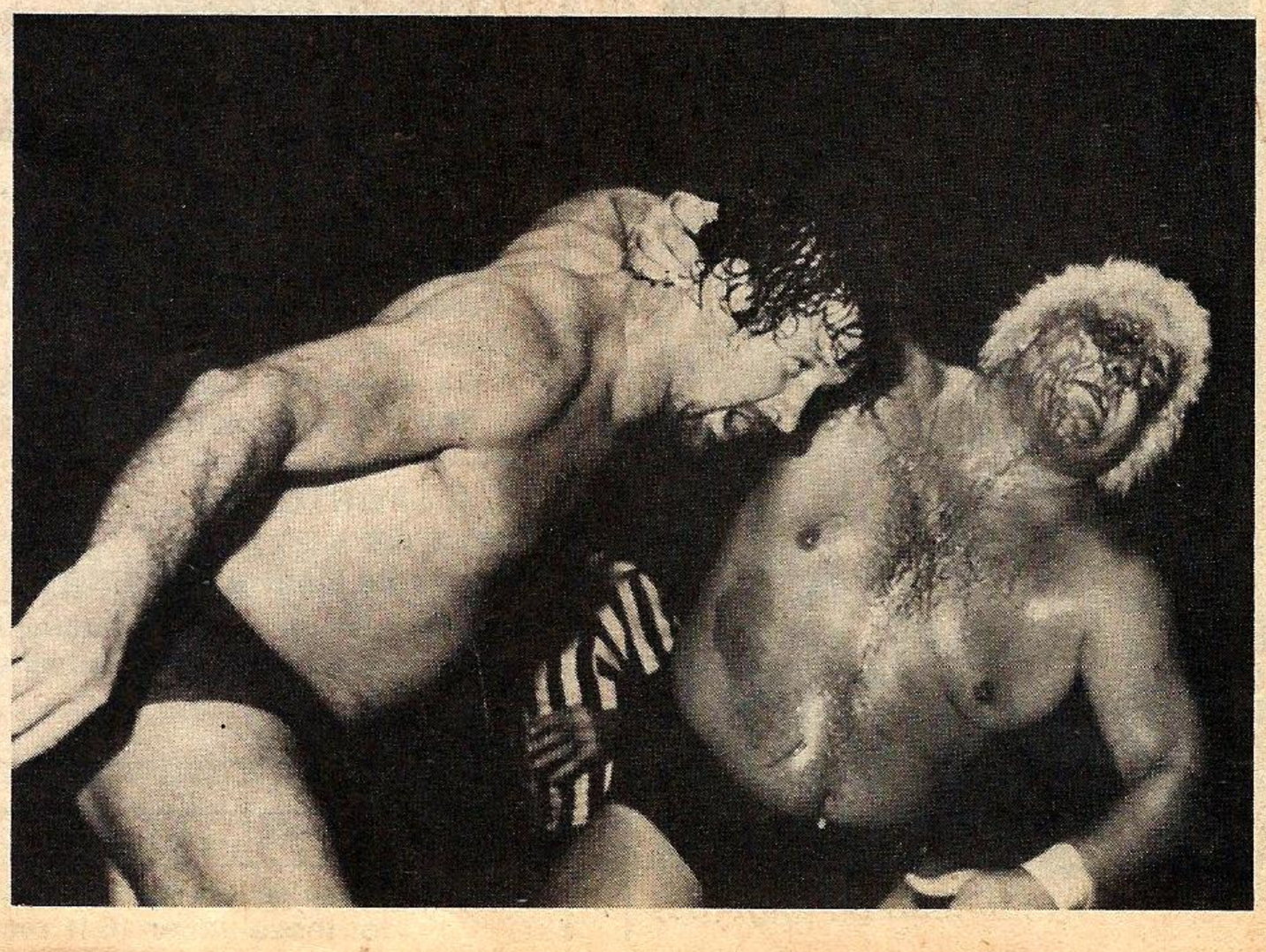


Above: Dusty's elbow is headed directly for Butcher Vachon's throat. Below: Dusty's biggest rivalry is undoubtedly with Terry Funk. Dusty will never forget Funk's sneak attack that cost him the NWA title.



MIL MASCARAS

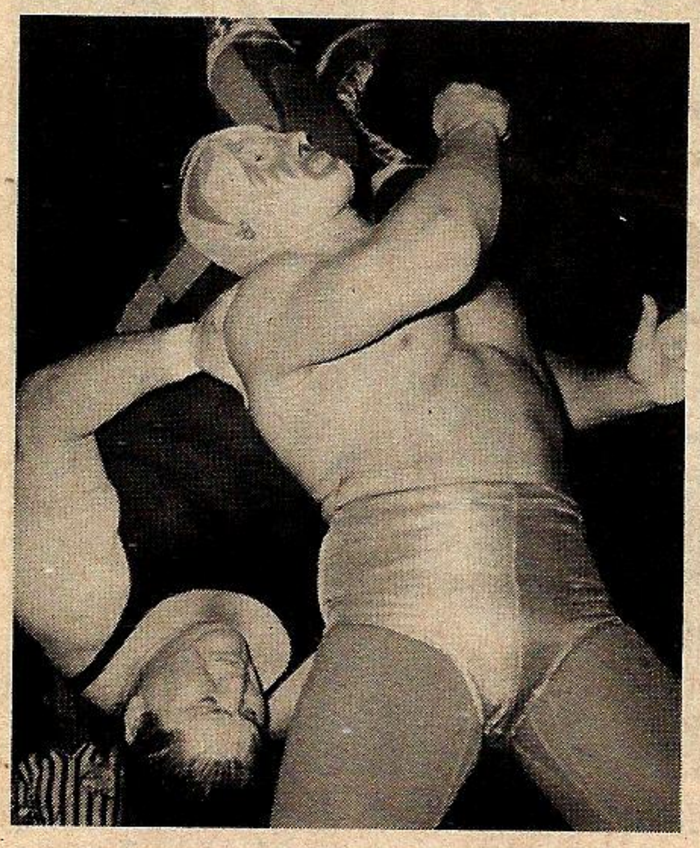
(Continued from Page 32)

than I know about him. To say I run before an area gets to know me is untrue."

"But isn't it true," a reporter asked, "that there is no substitute for actual combat? A man really doesn't know how to wrestle against you until a after a couple of matches. That's what other wrestlers are saying."

"I don't know them, either," Mil retorted. "We both start out the same."

"What people are saying is your moves are developed for success in a single match. Over the long haul, you couldn't beat them."



After flinging him into the ropes, Mascaras sends Ramos to the canvas with a well-executed backdrop.

"My moves are successful in any situation. Even if I had to wrestle a series of matches, I'd use the same moves and win. I'm sure of that."

"Will you wrestle Harley Race in a series of matches."

Mil was silent. When he finally spoke, the words sounded as if they were torn from him. "I can't. My contract forbids it."

As the reporters left, one mused, "You know, Mil's international success could ruin his career. The rumors could do what his opponents can't." □

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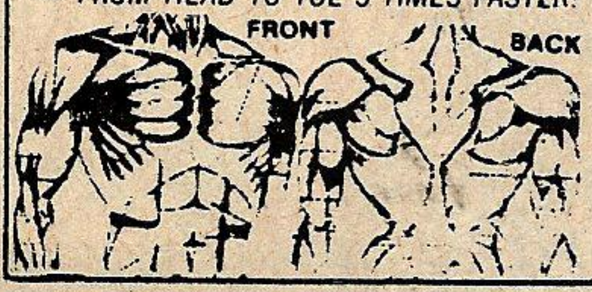

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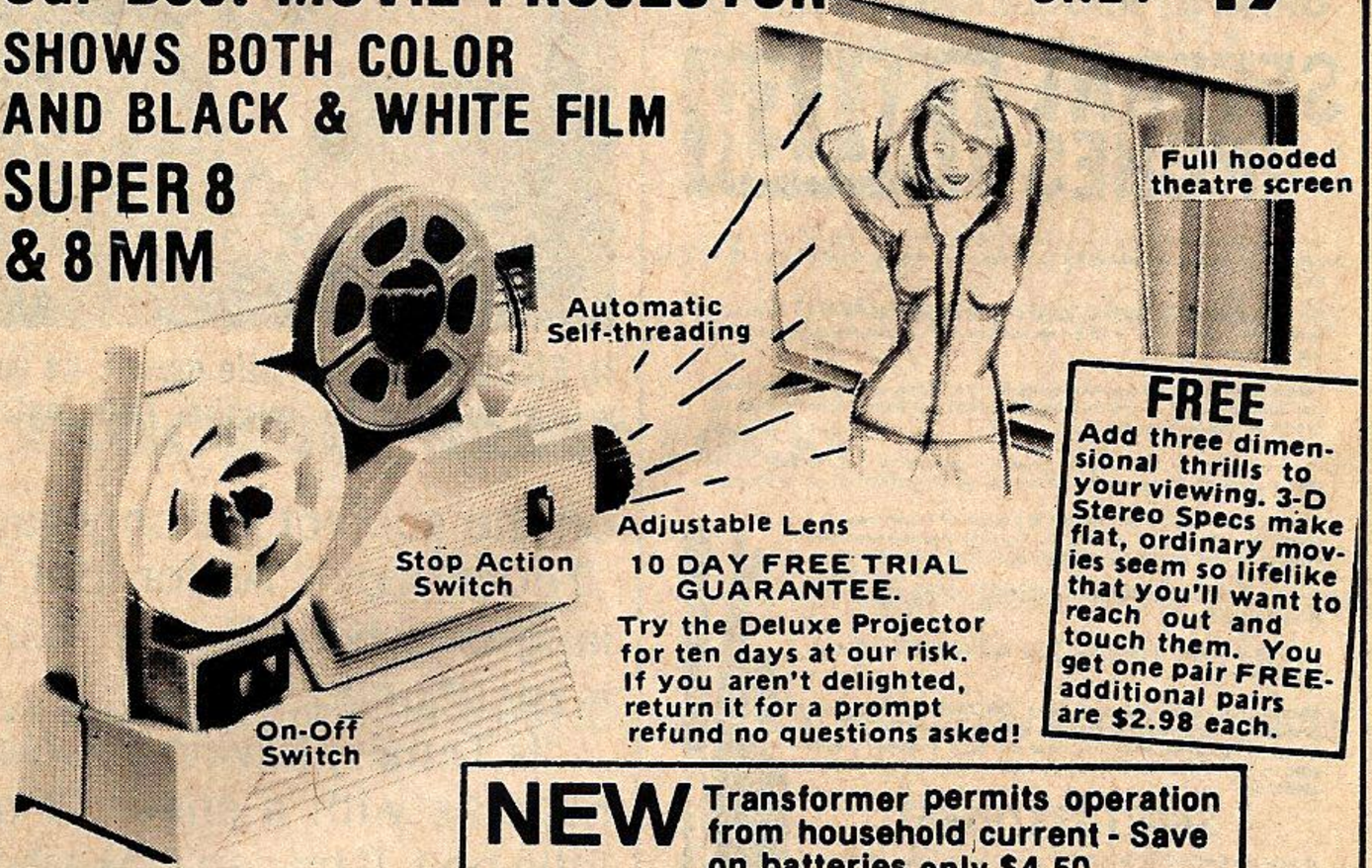

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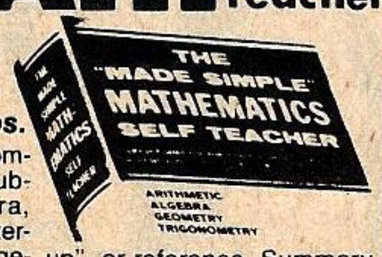

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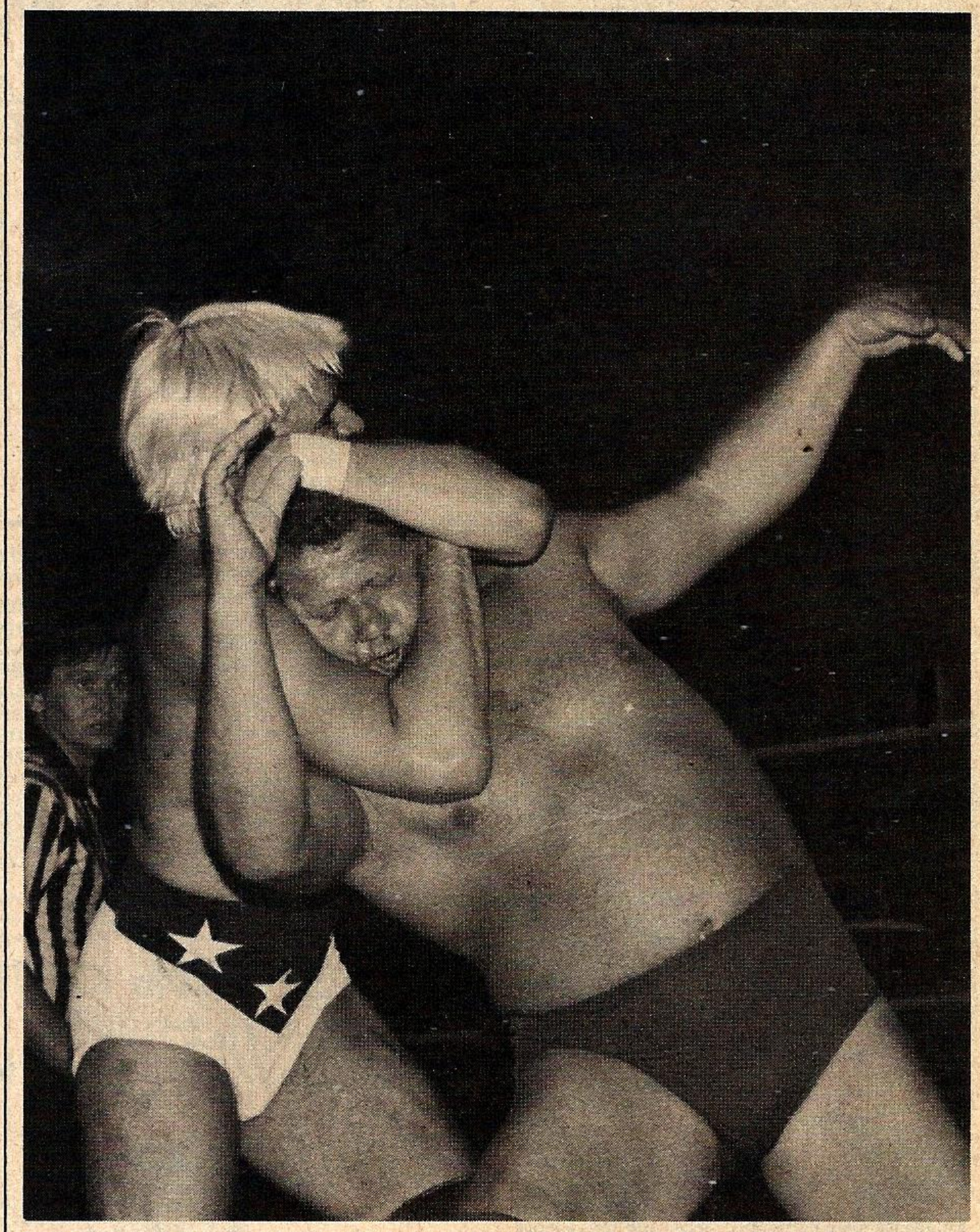
TOMMY RICH

(Continued from Page 29)



In Rich's first NWA title match, he nearly defeated Race with a sleeper hold. Tommy was scheduled for another title match the day after the tragic incident in Georgia.

on the subject, he only says, "Touch luck." As for Idol, he laughs when Rich's name is mentioned.

"Is Tommy having trouble?" he asks with a sneer. "Poor little boy. If he can't take it, he ought to find another line of work. They tell me accountants lead a quiet, safe life. Tommy should be good adding up a column of numbers. He's beginning to see one and one equals two. Get it? Two are better than one.

"Yeah, I've seen him wrestle recently. He stinks. He stunk before, he stinks now, and he'll always stink.

"Did I want to drive him out of wrestling? Nah. I just wanted to hurt him."

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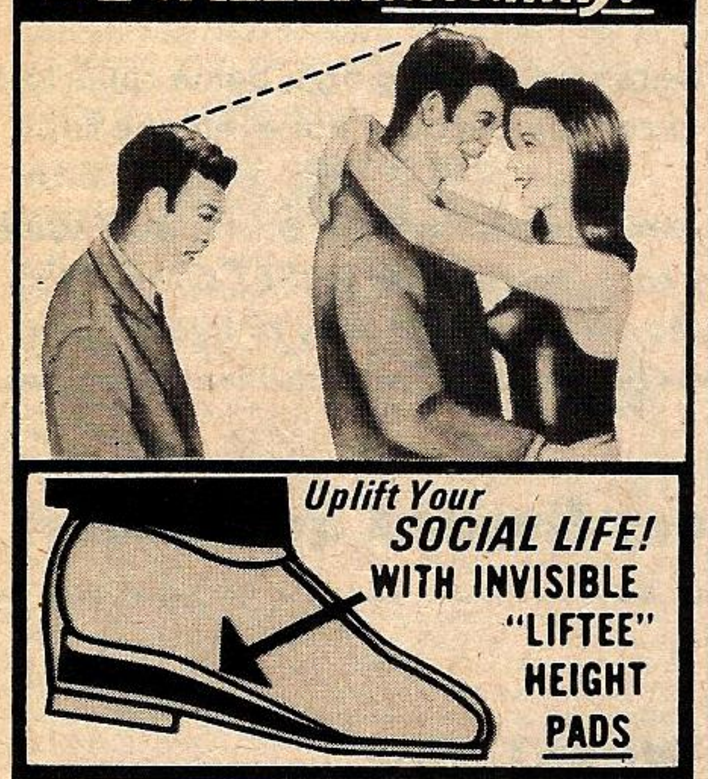

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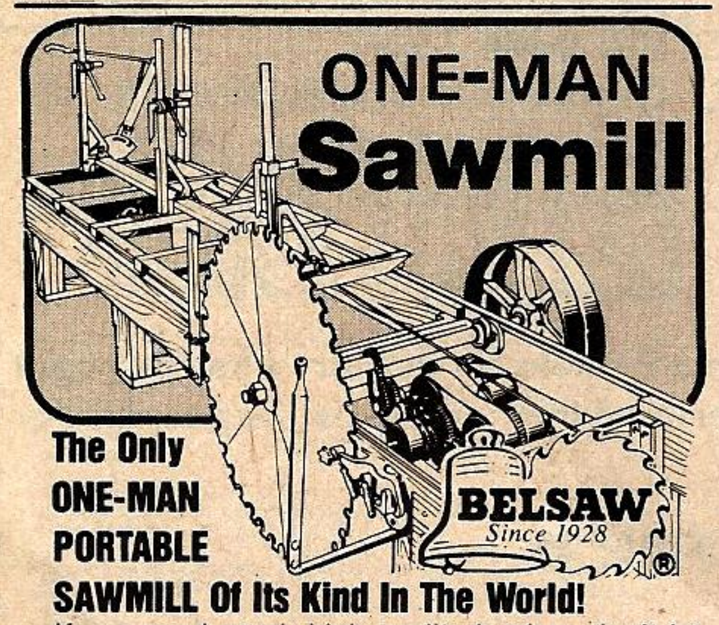

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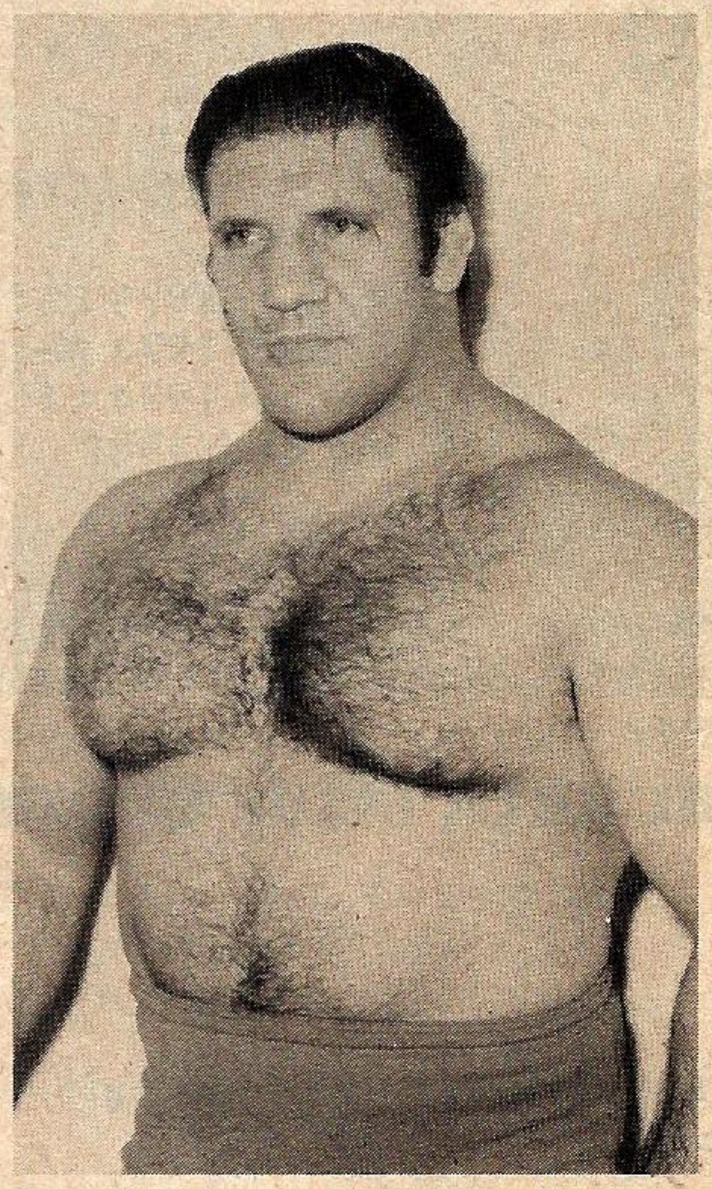
BRUNO SAMMARTINO

(Continued from Page 33)

no wrestler before or no wrestler afterwards can ever duplicate. His raw animal magnetism, manly kindless, and quick wit set him apart from mere wrestling mortals. Both in and out of the ring, Sammartino is a champion.

In his own words, Sammartino describes the 10 opponents who gave him his toughest bouts. These names barrel out of Bruno's past as well as his present. Men like Waldo Von Erich, Stan Stasiak, and The Sheik. Brutal foes like Superstar Billy Graham, Ivan Koloff, and Stan Hansen.

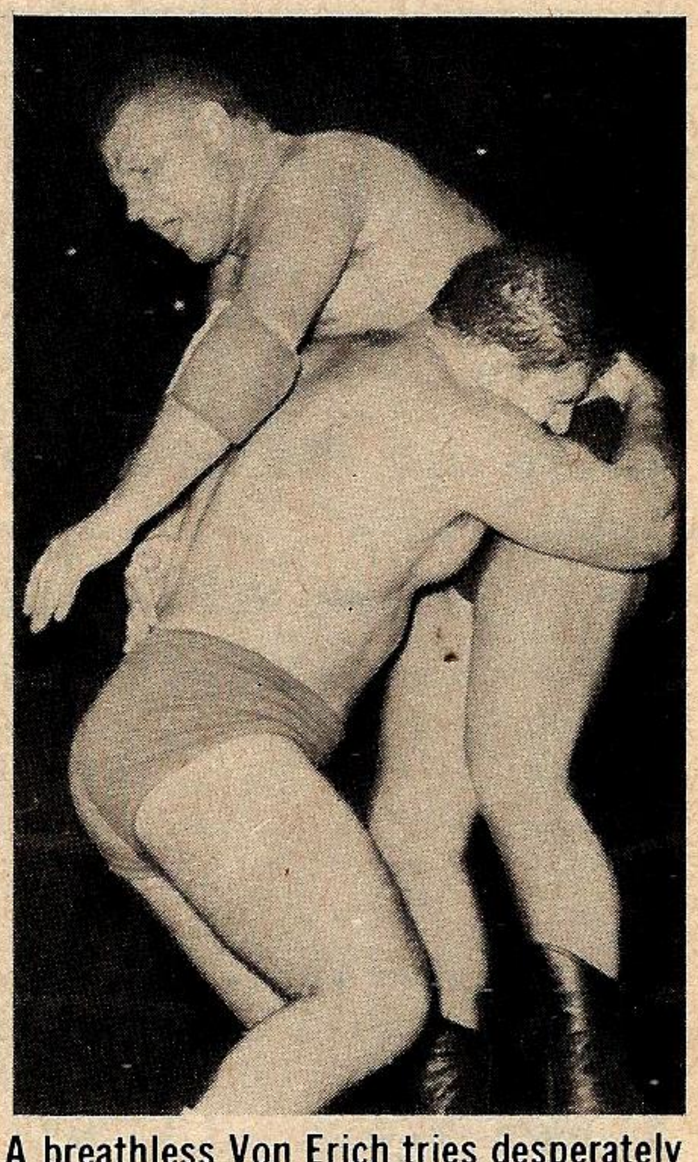


In all his years of professional wrestling—whether or not he was champion at the time—Bruno has never turned down a challenge.

That memorable night at Shea Stadium against Pedro Morales. A battle with Harley Race. Another against Ken Patera. And the painful struggle against Larry Zbyszko.

SAMMARTINO VS. WALDO VON ERICH

(Continued from Page 34)



A breathless Von Erich tries desperately to escape the famed Bruno Sammartino bearhug.

for a week.

I wouldn't dare rest. That would've given that creep satisfaction. I wouldn't let on how much it hurt, but doggone, I had to bite my lip.

Another time I wrestled that crazy lunatic, he brought a fireplace poker into the ring. I don't know how he smuggled that one in, but suddenly he's poking at my chest like a stack of wood. Doggone, if you can't fight fair, don't fight at all.

Wrestling Waldo Von Erich was a real challenge. You knew one little slip and your life was over, or at least you could lose an eye or piece of an arm. Always had to concentrate with Von Erich. You know, that creep was full of surprises. Doggone, I remember another time he tried to poke out my left eye. He'll never forget the beating I gave him for that one.

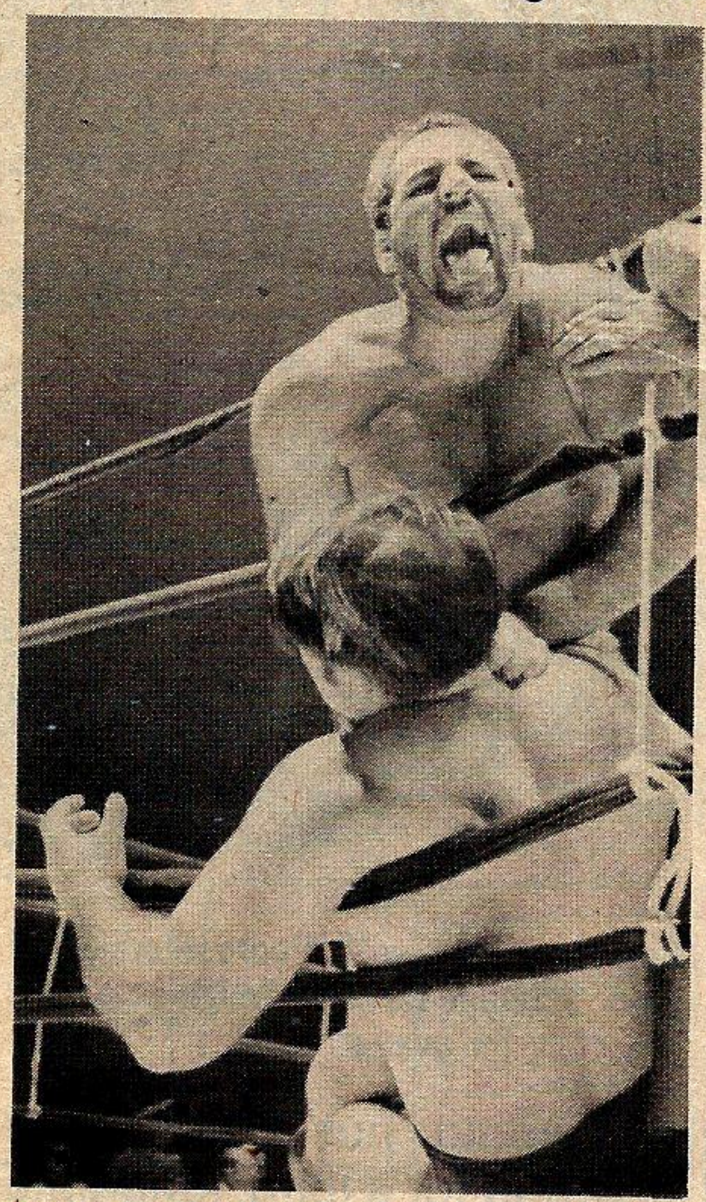
SAMMARTINO VS. THE SHEIK

(Continued from Page 35)

take because in his eyes is nothing. I mean, nothing sane.

I have to sidestep this nut. Most wrestlers would fall into the ropes and bounce back. Not The Sheik. This guy hangs there, then hurtles backward at me. He must have been going 30 miles an hour.

Another time that guy picked up a press table, knocked over some reporters, and tried to hit me over the head! Well, I can fight fire



His tongue hanging out and screaming for the entire arena to hear, The Sheik chokes Bruno.

with fire, so I picked up a chair, defended myself, broke his table and beat the stuffing out of him.

You know, they wrestle differently in the Arab world. The Sheik uses methods I never saw before. I have to say leaving a match against The Sheik with my head intact is quite an accomplishment.

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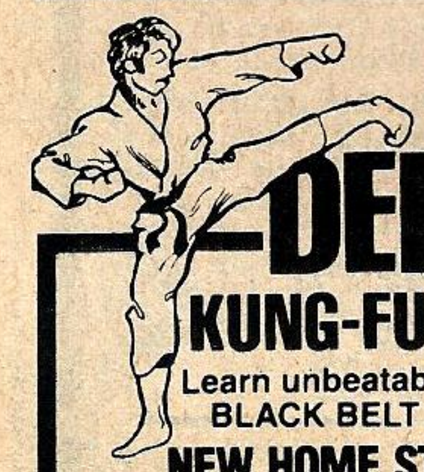

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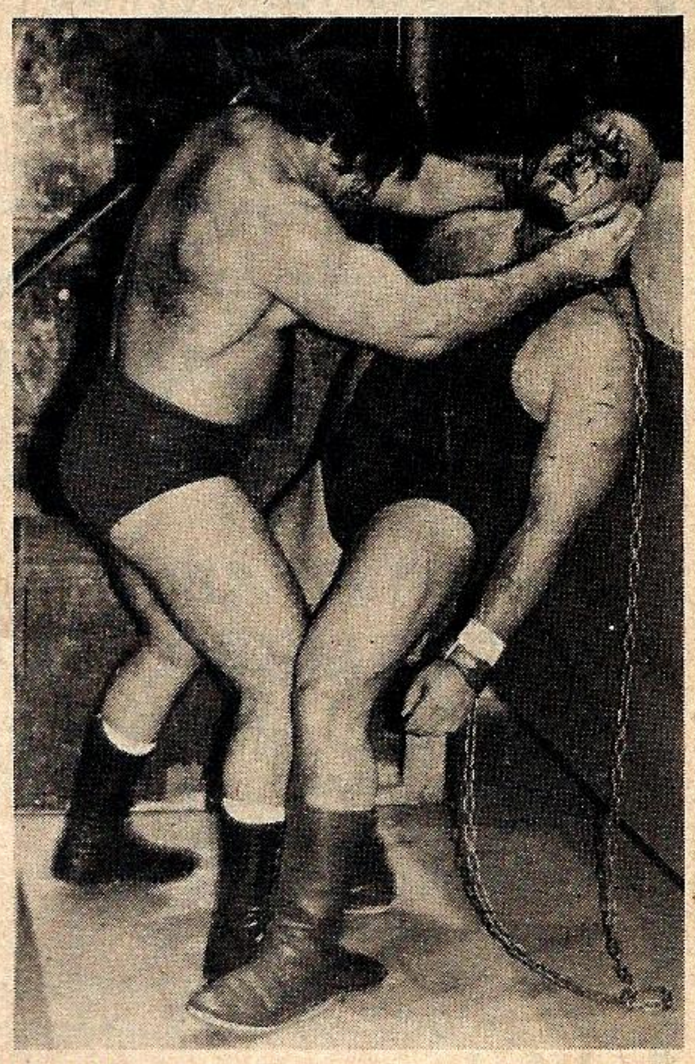
SAMMARTINO VS. IVAN KOLOFF

(Continued from Page 36)

move, one little moment.

For seven-and-a-half years I was champion. I was the one all the kids looked up to. I tried to bring glory and honor to the belt. I wanted the World Wrestling Federation championship to mean something. I didn't ever look at this title like it was just another belt, an ego trip. I was champion and doggone proud of my championship.

And then it all disappeared. I remember how quiet Madison Square Garden was, how eerie a sound the silence of 22,000 people can be. And their silence just echoed through my empty mind. I was drained. They were drained.



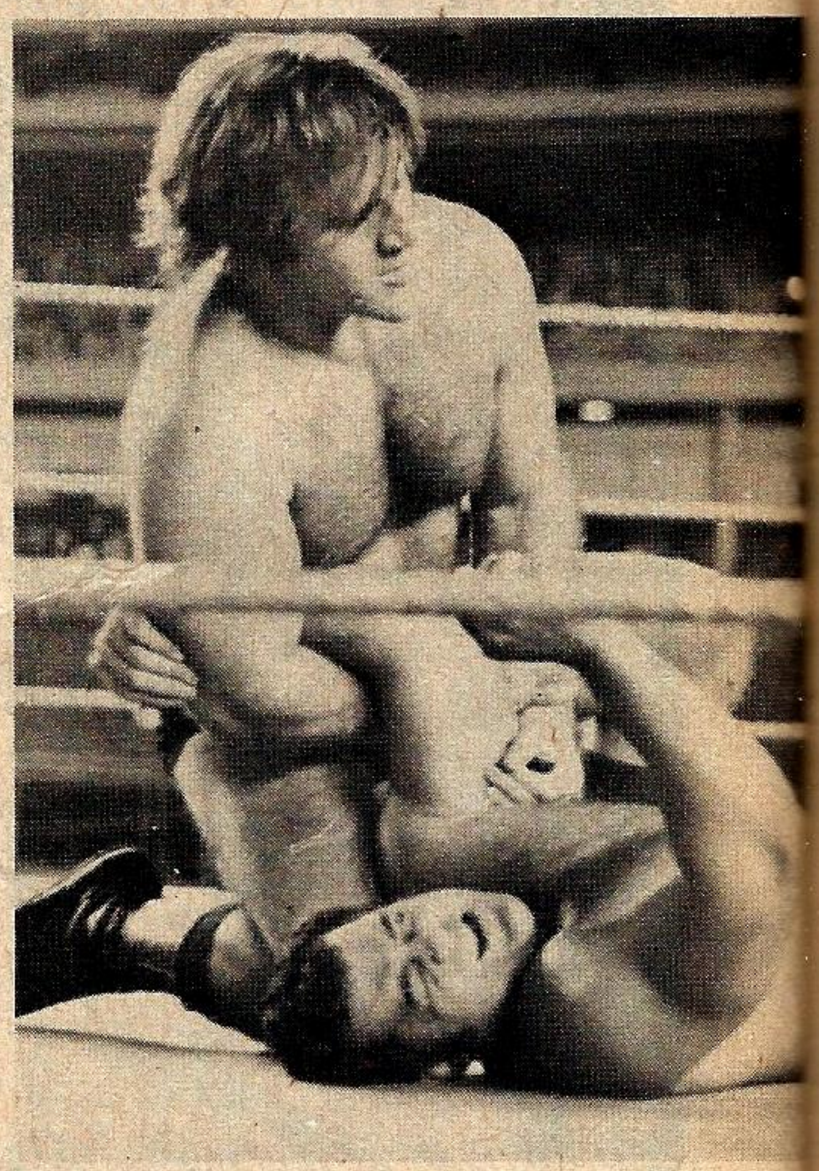
Koloff and Sammartino spilt large amounts of blood in their chain match in Boston.

They call it losing. Sometimes the triumphs blend together. But no one ever forgets the losses. No one.

SAMMARTINO VS. PEDRO MORALES

(Continued from Page 37)

Shea Stadium. What a night. The rain misted all over us. I felt like I wore a wet blanket before I stepped through the ropes. For one hour and 16 minutes, we wrestled, giving everything we had. That was my greatest bout, I think. I'd never met such a fine scientific wrestler before.



Bruno's match with Pedro Morales at Shea Stadium featured tough scientific wrestling for over an hour.

I would put Pedro in a bearhug for a long, long time and doggone, I was amazed the guy didn't just fall down and faint. Pedro tried a flying bodypress and I just managed to get away. For the longest time, doggone, we had each other in armlocks.

I'll tell you something. When we finished, I had no energy left. Still, I felt very good, even if the match ended in a draw. We showed you can wrestle good, and cleanly.

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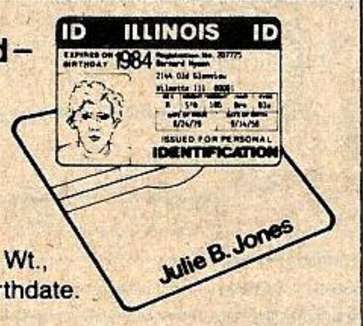

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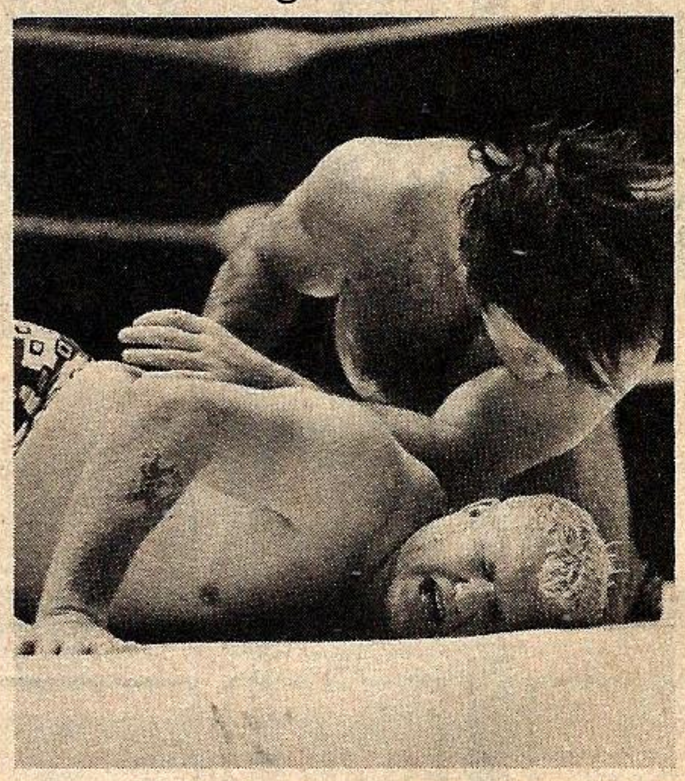
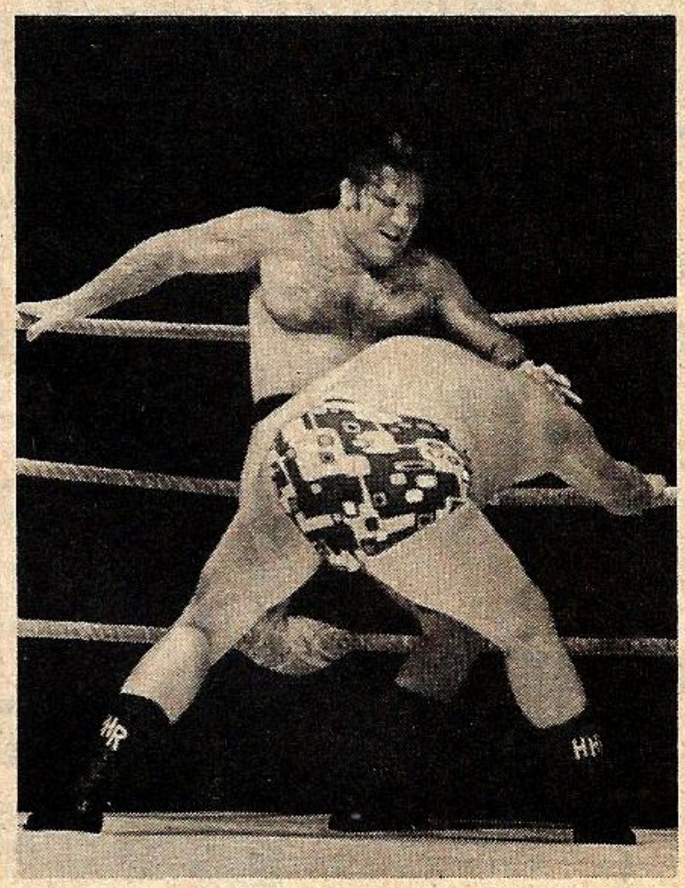
SAMMARTINO VS. HARLEY RACE

(Continued from Page 38)

whole career. You know, Race just wouldn't give in. Finally, I got the guy in a bearhug and started squeezing. I don't care how tough you are, a Sammartino bearhug will crush the resistance out of you. After several minutes, Race shouted, "I give up." But the officials ruled that came *after* the bell rang.



Bruno dominated Race, but was unable to capture the NWA title. Race, of course, still reigns as champion.

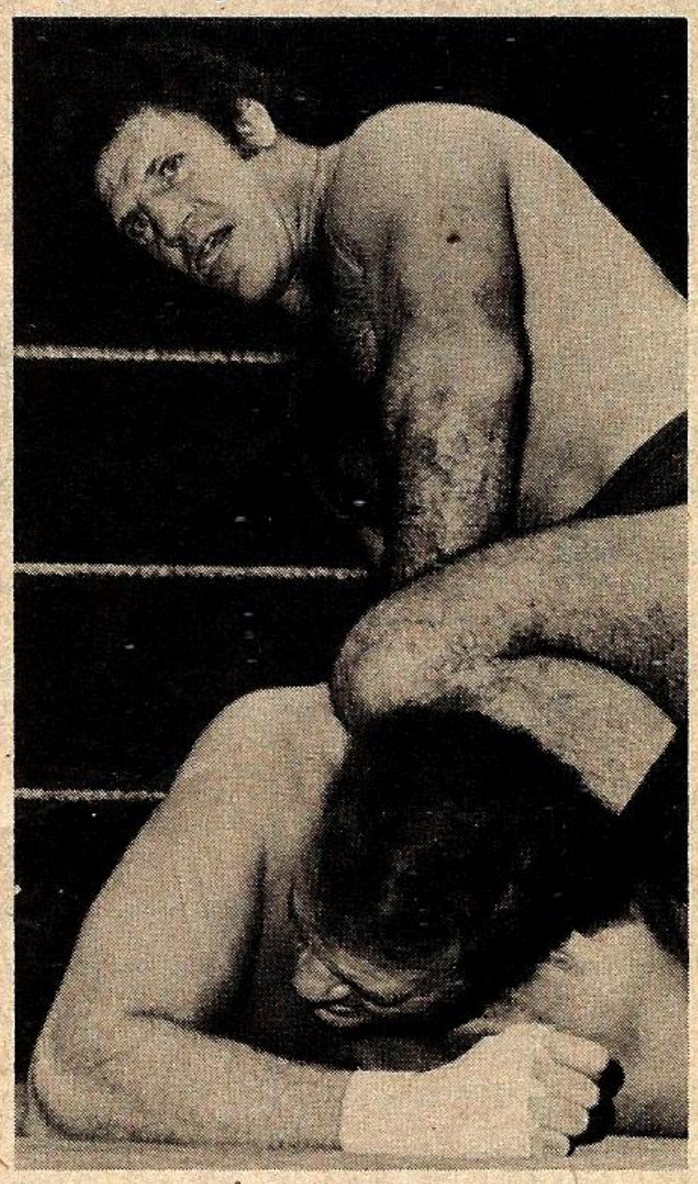


I don't know. I thought I had him. In any case, that Harley Race is a helluva athlete. You can mark that one down with a big Bruno gold star.

SAMMARTINO VS. STAN STASIAK

(Continued from Page 39)

arena. You know, a devastating maneuver like that can psyche a lesser man out. I had to use all my wily skills of both body and mind to keep my skin and my sanity.



Bruno took the WWF title from Stasiak. Stan's reign lasted only nine days.

I heard one of Stasiak's opponents had to be carried out of the ring, not because he had suffered a beating, but because he was so afraid of getting hit with the heart punch he nearly lost his mind.

I got hit with the heart punch only once. It was when he was WWF champion, the night I regained the belt. Doggone, I thought every piece of oxygen in my body was knocked out. But I am in good shape and I managed to survive. I was lucky. To survive a Stan Stasiak heart punch, well, let's just say I'm one of the lucky ones.

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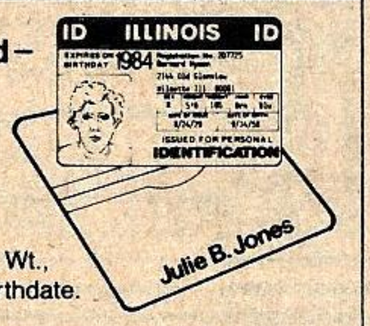

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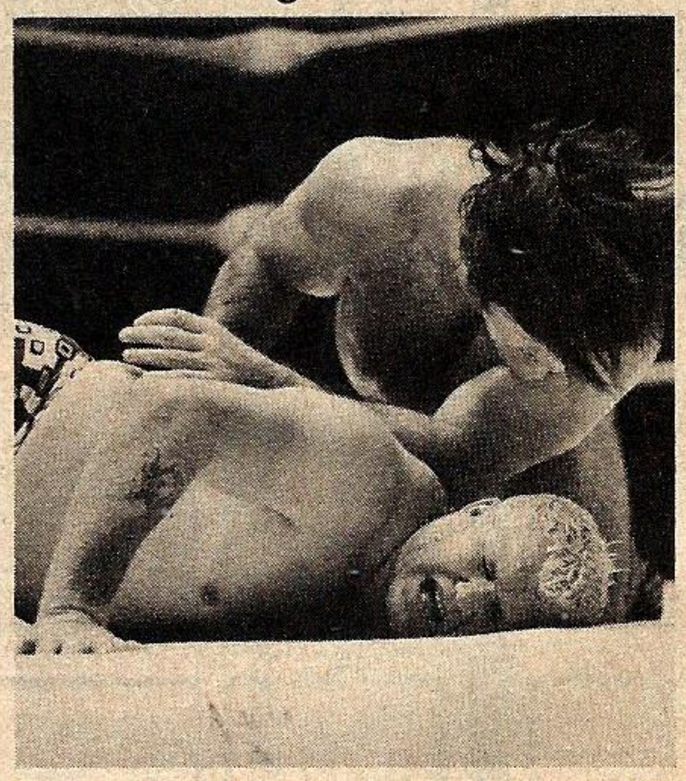
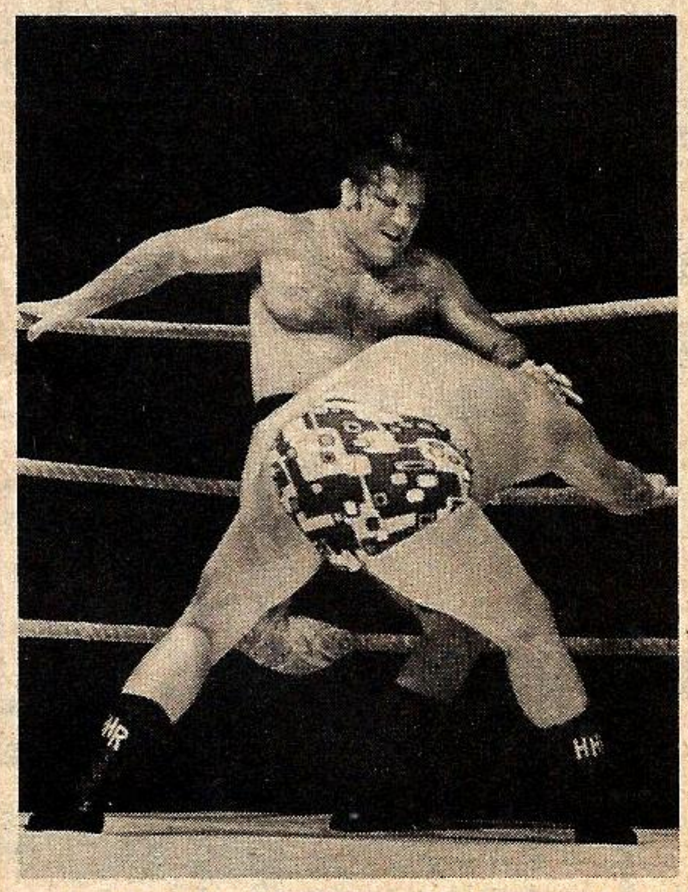
SAMMARTINO VS. HARLEY RACE

(Continued from Page 38)

whole career. You know, Race just wouldn't give in. Finally, I got the guy in a bearhug and started squeezing. I don't care how tough you are, a Sammartino bearhug will crush the resistance out of you. After several minutes, Race shouted, "I give up." But the officials ruled that came *after* the bell rang.



Bruno dominated Race, but was unable to capture the NWA title. Race, of course, still reigns as champion.

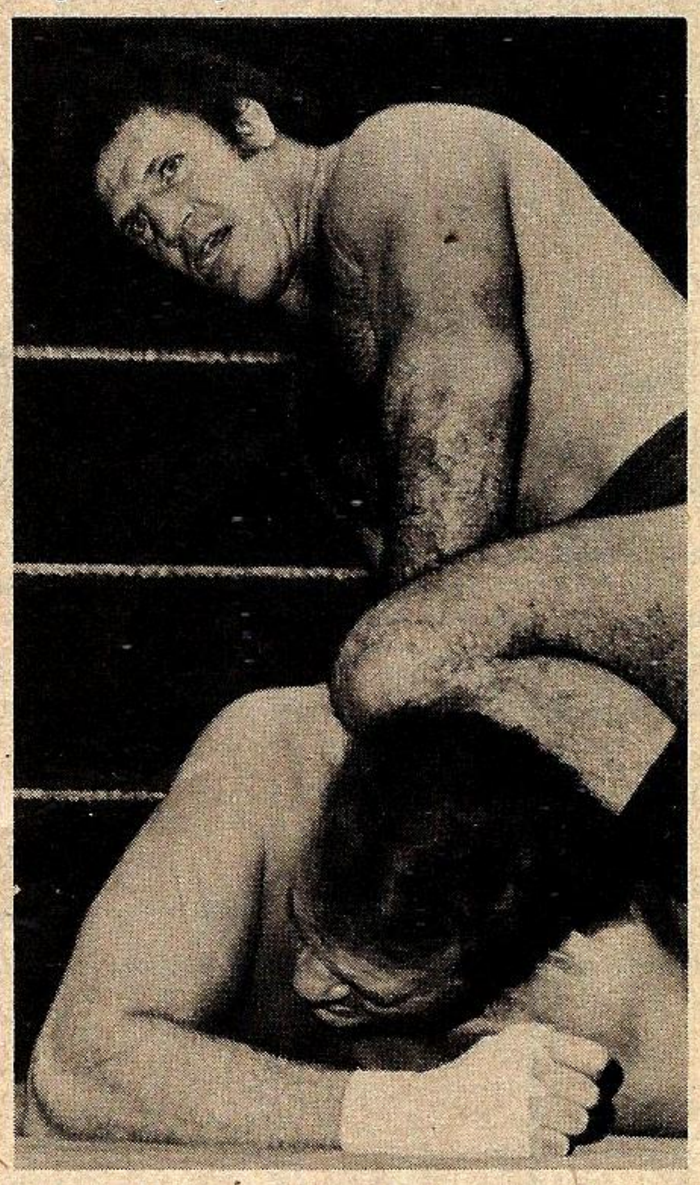


I don't know. I thought I had him. In any case, that Harley Race is a helluva athlete. You can mark that one down with a big Bruno gold star.

SAMMARTINO VS. STAN STASIAK

(Continued from Page 39)

arena. You know, a devastating maneuver like that can psyche a lesser man out. I had to use all my wily skills of both body and mind to keep my skin and my sanity.



Bruno took the WWF title from Stasiak. Stan's reign lasted only nine days.

I heard one of Stasiak's opponents had to be carried out of the ring, not because he had suffered a beating, but because he was so afraid of getting hit with the heart punch he nearly lost his mind.

I got hit with the heart punch only once. It was when he was WWF champion, the night I regained the belt. Doggone, I thought every piece of oxygen in my body was knocked out. But I am in good shape and I managed to survive. I was lucky. To survive a Stan Stasiak heart punch, well, let's just say I'm one of the lucky ones.

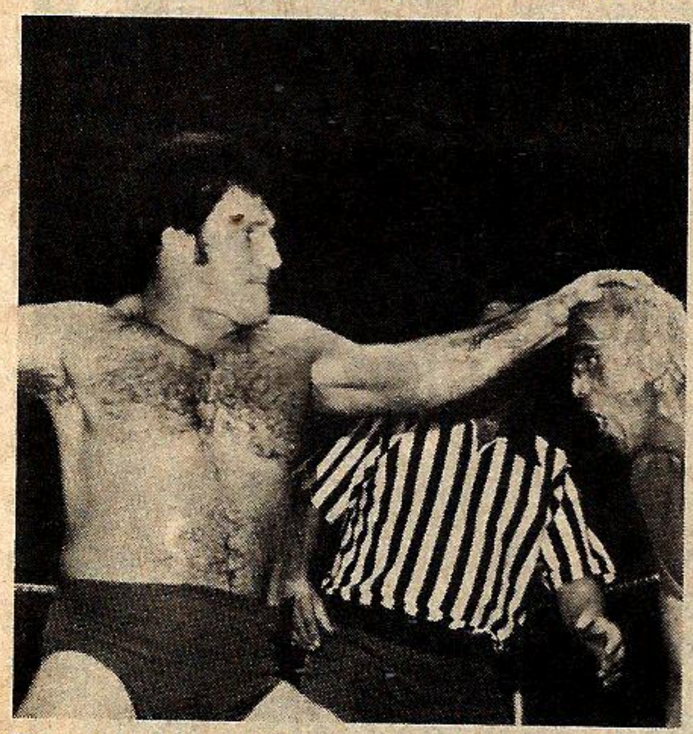
SAMMARTINO VS. SUPERSTAR GRAHAM

(Continued from Page 40)

can't win any other way but by cheating. Graham is the worst one I know because he's so slick about it. Before you look up, he's stolen your shoes, your socks, and hocked your laces.

Doggone, Graham thinks he's so beautiful. I've seen better heads in an old pizza oven. And I've seen better bodies on dummies. Which Graham certainly is. Or maybe a joker or a clown. An over-muscled dummy who can't even stretch his arms all the way. A man who wouldn't know a wrestling hold from a canoli.

Back to the match. Back to Graham's foot on the rope, which gave him enough leverage to defeat me. Or so he says. I have films showing Graham cheated. But he got away with it. And Bruno Sammartino is not the sort of man who creates controversy. If the bum's champion, he is champion. I would do nothing to cheapen the title.



Repeated overhand rights by Bruno opened a cut over Superstar Graham's left eye.

Billy Graham did that enough in his year or so as champion.

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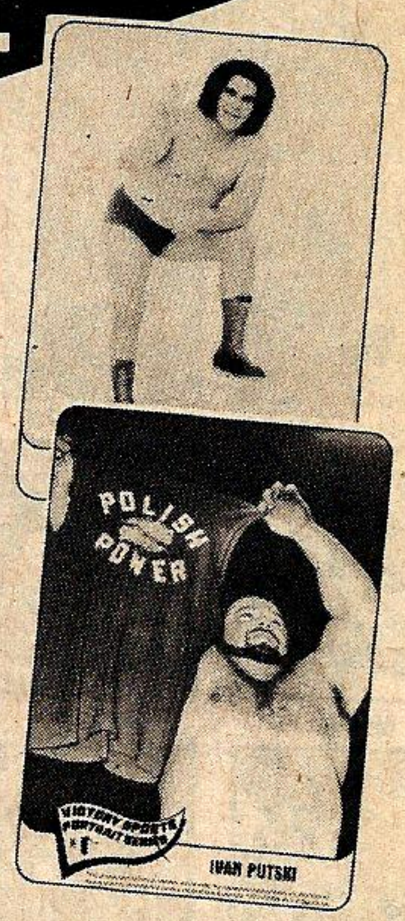

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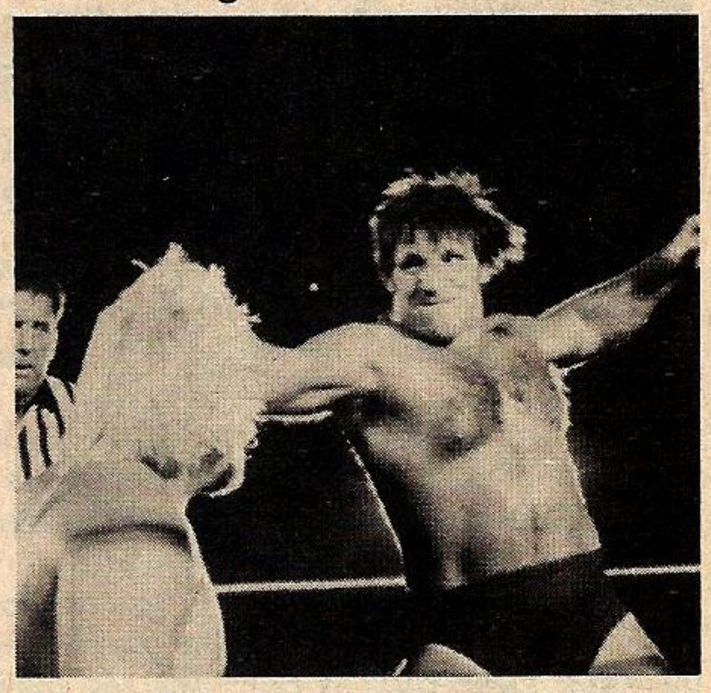
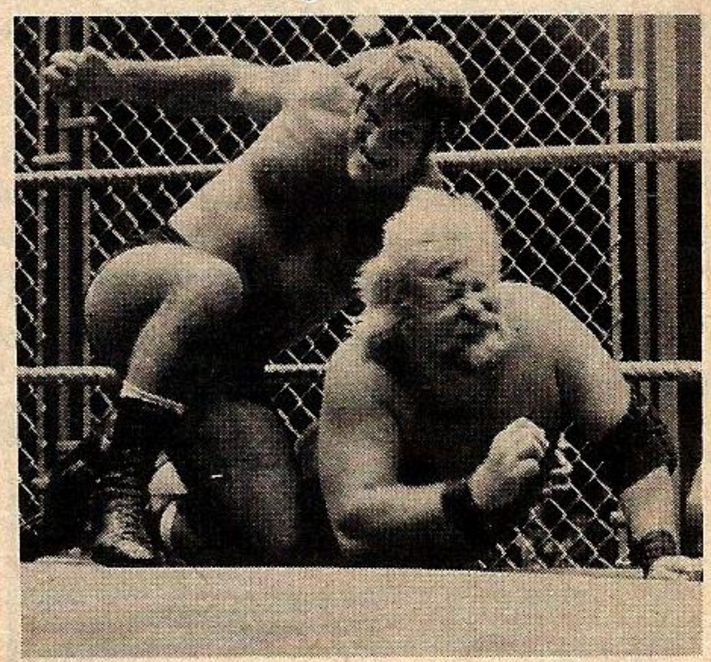
SAMMARTINO VS. STAN HANSEN

(Continued from Page 41)

That creep comes charging across the ring and lashes me with the Lariat. I thought all the teeth in my head would pop out. For a minute, you know, for one second, I thought I had died. Doggone if that isn't a scary kind of feeling.



Above: Bruno grabs Hansen and throws a left: Below: Bruno maintains the upper hand in their cage match.



So I was laid up in the hospital for quite a while recovering from a broken neck. I worried my career was over. Coming back from a severe injury like that is tricky. Fortunately, fans sent me telegrams and letters day and night praying for my recovery.

I made it back because I want to repay that bum for what he'd done. Sometimes revenge is a good thing to have building in your gut.

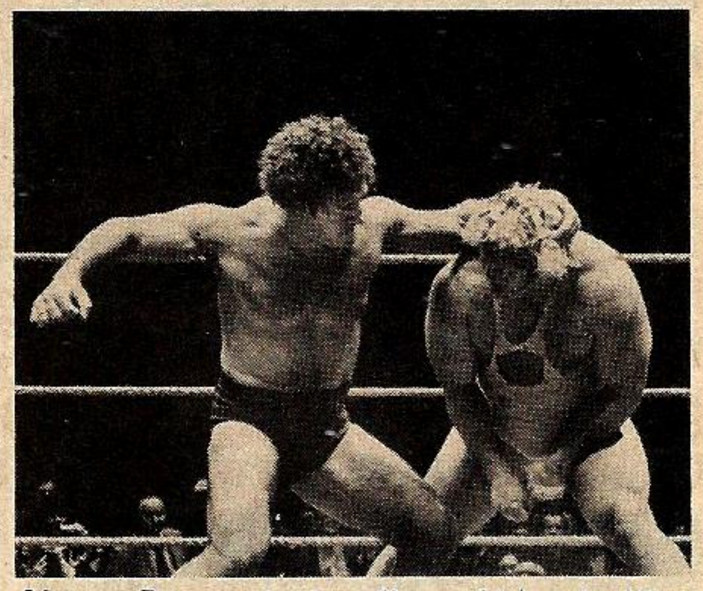
SAMMARTINO VS. KEN PATERA

(Continued from Page 42)

their sport, what kind of impression they'll make on the public. Then there are guys like Patera.

All he cares about is himself. He's very selfish. No one's feelings mean a darn to that guy. A fan asking for an autograph is like a little bug to him. A wrestler begging for mercy is like a bug to him. Everyone is a bug to him.

Talk about egos. You know, you wouldn't be a professional wrestler if you didn't have talent. What makes you a star is not how much talent you may have, but how you act in the ring. What kind of person you are means much, much more in the long run than what kind of maneuvers you have.

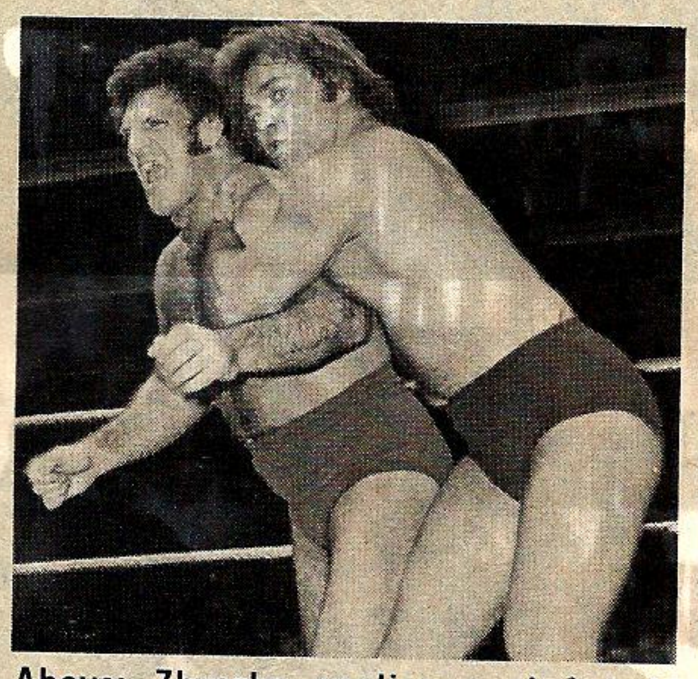


Above: Bruno starts a flow of blood with a succession of rights. Below: The opponents' eyes and arms lock in combat.

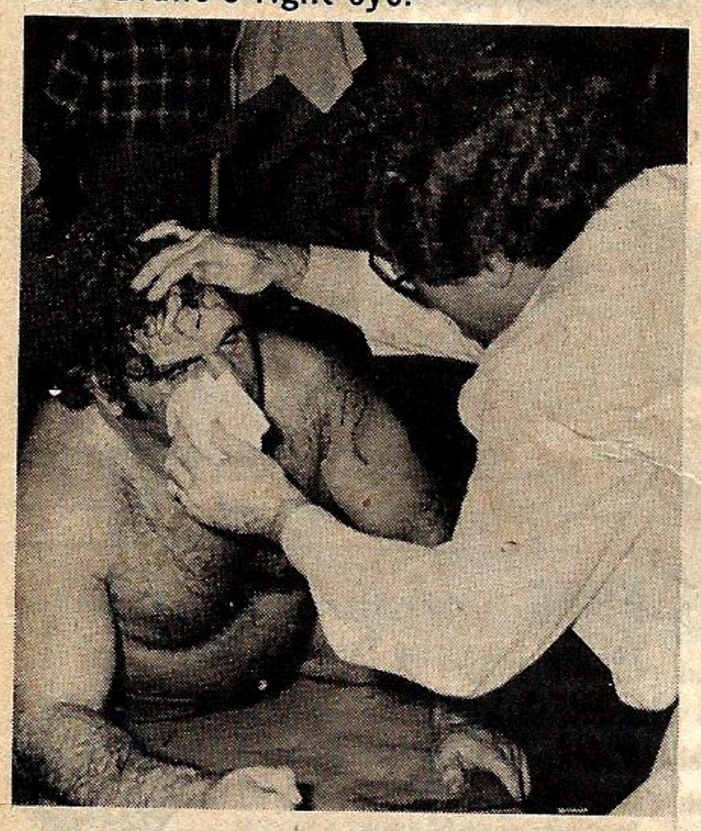
Patera never understood that. Doggone, what a shame. He coulda been a champion.

SAMMARTINO VS. LARRY ZBYSZKO

(Continued from Page 43)



Above: Zbyszko applies a chokehold. Below: The doctor tends to a deep wound over Bruno's right eye.



with Bruno Sammartino? It's a crime? No. I was damn good to that guy and look how he repays me. Well, our matches started out as textbook scientific wrestling. Then the creep hit me with a chair, nearly knocked the brains out of my head.

To hell with Zbyszko, that lying cheat. That bum wanted to brawl. That's bad enough. But that doggone creep goes on television and says that I broke the rules, that, me, Bruno Sammartino, me, I was a rulebreaker. That lying bum.

Well, he wants a brawl, he'll get a brawl. That punk won't know what hit him when I finish him off.

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